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Charles Green



Handwritten scribbles and a vertical line in the top left corner.



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PAUSE AND RETROSPECT:

OR,

A MINISTER'S AIMS REVIEWED;

BEING

THE LAST DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN

PARADISE STREET CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL.

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU.

WITH AN ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE
OF THE NEW CHURCH IN HOPE STREET.

LONDON:

J. CHAPMAN, 142, STRAND.

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The following Sermon was preached on Sunday Morning, July 16th, on taking leave of my Congregation, previously to a year's absence, for the purposes of needful rest and foreign travel. This term, granted to me with generous indulgence, will bring the history of the present Chapel to a close: and on my return, the new Church, now in process of erection in Hope Street, will be opened for worship. Whilst to the society, and to myself alike, the services of the day stood at the commencement of a temporary separation, to me they permanently closed the sight of a place consecrated by many ineffaceable recollections. The various memories and hopes incident to such an occasion, will serve to explain, on the one hand, a few allusions in the discourse, and, on the other, the desire of my hearers for its publication. I am well aware that it owes its interest entirely to adventitious opportunity: but the time naturally gave to the mere wish of friends a deserved authority; and I throw off the following pages in their original form, without further thought of their imperfections.

Appended to the Sermon is the substance of a speech delivered on occasion of laying the foundation-stone of Hope Street New Church: reprinted from the report in the Christian Reformer for June. This addition is made in compliance with a desire frequently expressed, to have, in a more convenient form, some record of a day memorable to those whom it concerned.

J. M.

LIVERPOOL, JULY 19TH, 1848.

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PAUSE AND RETROSPECT.

2 CORINTHIANS, XIII, 7 and 9

NOW I PRAY TO GOD THAT YE DO NO EVIL; NOT THAT WE SHOULD APPEAR APPROVED
BUT THAT YE SHOULD DO THAT WHICH IS HONEST, THOUGH WE MAY BE AS
REPROBATES.—FOR WE ARE GLAD WHEN WE ARE WEAK, AND YE ARE STRONG: AND
THIS ALSO WE WISH, EVEN YOUR PERFECTION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-WORSHIPERS,—

THE peculiarities of our mutual position this day, may not only excuse, but require me to depart a little from the usual course of reflection and appeal. It is not my practice, as you will bear me witness, to introduce any *personal* element into the services of this place; or to turn the footstool of worship into the throne of egotism. It is my office, and my joy, to be the mere organ and vehicle of truths and sanctities, that claim and command us all; to lose myself in the solemn universe which I endeavour to interpret; to open a medium of contact between the highest spirit and the humblest want. But, to-day, I close the history of sixteen

years; and the second stage of a service, which can have only a third, reaches its end. Many, whose venerable support, when I began, was as the staff of my strength, are here no more: and children, who could then notice nothing but the novelty in this place, now listen with understanding heart. The voice of young experience which then addressed you, has learned, not without the discipline of sorrow and humiliation, to tell something of the tale of our humanity. It is impossible not to take a retrospect of the way which we have trod. Another such term—on which, however, it were presumption to reckon—and opportunity will be drawing to its close. The time calls for review: not in the spirit of a miserable pride, as if our work were not greater than ourselves;—nor in that of abject self-depreciation, as if such a work did not ennoble any powers that can bear it;—but with a hopeful and humble eye to effectual revision. Before you then, my hearers, in whose hearts are hid the fruits of all my work; and before Him, who alone knows its secret seed and aliment, would I render some account of my Ministry, and refer to its characteristic aims and spirit.

Nothing has been nearer to my heart, than to *substitute among you the Religion of Consciousness for the Religion of Custom*. It is quite true, and it is a truth too plain to miss, that it is the business of religion to preside over our inner world,—to rule the thoughts, to quiet the passions, to elevate the will. It is also true, and it is a truth far less

understood, that the condition of that inner world itself determines our religion:—that, precisely in proportion as the affections are pure and deep, the conscience clear and strong, and the imagination familiar with great and beautiful examples,—are heavenly realities discerned, and the windows of Reason thrown open to the empyrean light. In the mind barren with selfishness, the very root is withered, from which the blossom and the shade of holy hope must spring. To one who dishonours himself by sloth and excess, God becomes invisible and incredible. From him who quickens his business, or hurries in his talk, in order to push aside the whispers of a smaller but a truer voice, the awful form of Duty sorrowfully retires, and lets him believe, that life is given to play his own game, and not to serve another's will. From such men, the very power of perception itself is absent: they look through no transparent medium, but through a glass clouded with earthly steams: so that, demonstrate as you will the realities beyond, they *cannot* see. Moral and emotional disorder as effectually excludes religious truth, as intellectual mania vitiates ordinary judgment: and the best schooling will teach nothing, till the wounded nature is healed, and the fever of the soul abates. Both the theoretical doubts, and the practical deadness of religion will remain, I believe, untouched, till they are dealt with by this rule. They are but symptoms, which it is useless directly to attack, and which can vanish only with an altered mind. Till the soul

attains some loftiness, by the free and faithful activity of its best powers, faith is not really possible to it: and when it has assumed this temper, misgivings will trouble it no more. Men *rise* into holy truth, as into a vision denied to the low level and sluggish atmosphere of a flat spirit: you must lift their feet upon the mountains, and make them feel the wing of the upland air, and pierce the cloud-belt that floats between earth and sky: and then, amid the wilderness of glories, they will discern the palace of the Infinite, and feel the silence of the Eternal. It is not *light* that we want, but *eye*. With our utmost labour and ingenuity of research, we can do little to increase the *outward* testimony, by which God, Perfection, Immortality, are disclosed to us. That testimony, fixed in creation and in history, is open to all men, and nearly constant for all ages: it tells its tale without our help. But we *may* waken into consciousness the faculties to which it speaks; we may touch a sense which had never revealed itself before: we may begin a low sweet music, at which the sleeping soul may turn with wondering face, and gently cross the bridge of dreams, and open at length the living eye, and say, "What world is this; and wherefore am I here?" I have ever been profoundly convinced that the ultimate source and abode of religion is in those powers of our nature which the artificial habits and ordinary culture of our civilization tend to repress; and have esteemed it the blessing and the glory of a day

of prayer, not to perpetuate, but to counteract, the modes of thought, the rules of judgment, the standards of feeling, which lower us every day. No holdfasts or securities of reasoning are of the least avail, till the fundamental reverence is reached: you must find your ground, before your anchor can be thrown. I have known from myself, and have felt for others, that when once we have descended to the true springs of devotion in our nature, doubt and fears spontaneously clear away: and whatever may befall, the solemn guiding truths are thenceforth interwoven, as a work of divine art, into the very texture of the soul, and by no access of light can be ever bleached away.

In immediate correspondence with this view, I have also wished to elicit *the moral beauty, the inherent sublimity, and the natural authority, of Christianity*. Without the full feeling of these characteristics, I have feared that an appeal to the external attestation of preternatural events would produce a feeble, or even an unhappy, impression: while, on the other hand, the largest amount of historical belief, when gained, can do no more than awaken this feeling, and bring us in discipleship to the feet of Christ. The imperfect media through which the incidents of the Advent are transmitted to our knowledge, may render it difficult to obtain assurance as to many of its external facts. But they leave no doubt as to that grand central figure, in which all that is august and tender in the religion is collected and impersonated. To

look upon that form, blending the majesty of the Prophet with the sweetness of the child; to hear that voice of grace and truth, revealing the open secrets of the heart, and, with the ease of self-renunciation, giving precepts that have the depth of prayer; to watch the vicissitudes of his mind, the flush of early hope, the shade of deepening grief, the light of constant trust: to follow him to the beach, the village home, the leper's haunt, the temple courts, the upper room, the moon-lit mount, the cross, the skies;—and to feel, as he speaks to the various lot and many-coloured guilt of men, the penetration of his simplicity;—if this be not enough to bring us to his feet, I do not think that we are of his sheep, or shall ever know his voice. If we discern the perfectness of his spirit, if we recognise it as divine, is anything wanting to the sense of its *authority*? And if we do not discern this, could any coercion of outward demonstration create the feeling? Nothing surely can have *authority* with us, save that which touches the seat of all authority,—the conscience. Hence, to harmonize the teachings of Christ with the moral intuitions of the mind, to show how they raise us to a consciousness of duty and capacity unfelt before, to clear away the confused rivalry of other images, and make it apparent that, in all human history, he stands at the unapproached summit, the mingling point of the ideal and the real; this has been the purpose I have followed with the fullest heart. We have learned to regard all minds as of one race, variously

partakers of one inspiration, melting at their upper margin, —beyond the centre of their will,—into the all-comprehending Spirit, that holds them, “as the sea her waves.” And such are their affinities together, that the highest which we see carries us on to a higher, in whom we believe : and thus is Christ the image and representative of God. This appreciation of Jesus, resting upon intrinsic personal ascendancy of soul, being once secured, the historical limitations of his life, its human colouring with the sentiments of a nation and a time, lie outside its *religious* office, its relation to our faith and trust : they become simple matters of secular criticism : and the temporary form of the first Christianity is harmonized with its essential perpetuity. The due understanding of this form, however, being very needful to an apprehension of the spirit, it has been my care, through all the years of our connexion, to prepare for the hour of worship by one of instruction : and to present whatever light I could collect, for the reproduction in your imagination of the first age of Christian literature, and the long antecedents of Hebrew history. Teaching a little, I have learned much. And, if I think the *records*, which are the vehicle of Christianity, less perfect than I once supposed ; if they leave some things uncertain, on which I should be grateful to be assured ; if the element of Hellenistic theory, and Jewish misconception, seems larger than I had thought ; yet all this does but disengage the

inspired Author in greatness more solitary and signal: and, by substituting for the vague gaze of reverence, a real, human view of that amazing time, fills me with a far deeper interest in the men, and a profounder trust in the religion.

Another favorite task with me has been, to find some "soul of goodness in things evil:" not indeed in things *morally* evil, which it is quite beyond our province to palliate and indulge, but in things *intellectually* wrong,—in those forms of opinion and worship which shock and repel us, and constitute, in our view, the errors and superstitions of Christendom. There are times, indeed, when it becomes a plain duty of sincerity, a simple expression of manly confidence in truth, to say *why* these doctrines offend us, and why we cannot listen to the invitation to exchange the simplicity of our living faith, for the perplexities of Greek, or African, or Medieval creeds. Nor have we been unmindful of this obligation, when imposed upon us by the aggression of proselytism. But, I think, we draw from error a better prize, when we make it yield us productive truth, than when we compel it to grant us barren victory. And it has ever been my delight to find out, *what it is* that endears and recommends to men representations of God and divine things, which to us appear so dark and intricate: what sentiment they touch; what want they satisfy. For my own part, I have entire and ineradicable faith in the loving instincts of pure hearts: far more than in the range and clearness of

my own particular understanding. I feel assured that all minds, in proportion as they are good and faithful, attain to like perceptions of things beautiful and sacred: that they mean at bottom very much the same thing: that the reason, conscience, and affection, from which faith is the immaculate birth, are not personal accidents, different in different men, but an indivisible emanation of the infinite and illuminating Spirit; seemingly broken, indeed, by the media of transmission, into the several colors, yet the undulation still of one ethereal base, and capable of reunion into the same white flood of truth. We have always something to learn, till we have traced the beliefs which we disown and others trust, up to their inmost seat in human nature, and detected what good and holy thing it is, which they poorly struggle to express. This insight gained, we dissent no longer with the heat of a narrow antipathy, but with the quiet of a large sympathy. We become conscious of seeing only in part; aware of the immense firmament of truth in which we float, and wakeful for every new star, which the guiding heavens may reveal. It has seemed to me that thus only can a truly deep-souled and Catholic charity be reached; a charity not of contemptuous indolence, "caring for none of these things;" not of constitutional good-nature, negligent of the sound heart, be there only a bland surface, of life; not of self-complacent forbearance, uttering platitudes about the innocence of error, and amiably pitying

the delusions of mankind; but of genuine reverence; of joint partnership in the heritage of truth and goodness; of affectionate self-distrust and earnest outlook on a future, affluent in discovery, and sublime in harmonies.

Once more. I have sought, with an urgency of heart which I believe no failure can exhaust, to give you a sense of *the Infinite Nature of Duty*, and to sustain that temper of aspiration, in which is found the great Christian secret of blended humility and hope; of self-reverence and self-denial; of penitence and dignity; of resignation and resolve; of energy and repose. There is scarcely a truth which impresses me more deeply than this;—that Infinitude attaches not, as is generally conceived, merely to *quantities*, like Space and Time, but to certain *qualities*, as Beauty and Sanctity. The Universe, which is every where and always, has infinity of one kind; the free human Soul, which may be fair and good, has infinity of the other. In God, the two currents of immensity mingle, and make one shoreless ocean of perfection. It is one of the signatures of our immortality, that while we may always choose the *better* part, we never realise the *best*; that when we have put forth a conquering resolve, the victory, in being won, loses its glory, and becomes a dream; that every thing kindles us in the future, and then fades when past—a pure and lambent fire on the altar of our worship, but declining to light the gross fuel of our self-content. In this feature of our nature, which Christianity

alone interprets aright, and which has nowhere such expression as on the countenance of Christ, we see the law of our progress, and the explanation of our griefs. It rebukes our poor attainments and mean estimates; it wakes us from the sleep of habit on the ground, and throws us off on the wing of aspiration, through the higher air. I confess then, it has been my desire to prevent your ever having what are called "the pleasures of a good conscience." I have hoped to make it clear, that these belong to the little life of the child, moving in a bounded circle of law, which obedience may entirely fill; and that they exist not in the Christian's universal empire of love, through which duty ever expands, with the enlarging limits of conception, and bursting the bounds of the actual, occupies, with God, the sphere of the possible. True, there must ever be a certain *shadow* attending this temper of aspiration. But it is a shade, like that upon the soul of Christ when he said, "Peace I leave with you, *my* peace I give unto you;" a shade of sanctity, rather than of sadness; of waiting promise, rather than of barren regret; and ever implying a heavenly light in the future, throwing the darkness of our earthly form upon the past.

By such leading aims have I been guided in my attempt to reach the secret seats of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Duty. But now, having said thus much, I start back at the Image I have raised. I shrink before it abashed and

humbled. When I look at the pure ideal of the Christian Life,—when I discern in it the infinite depth of beauty,—when I reflect what sort of soul it must be to represent it truly, and impart to it in thought and deed no colour of dishonour,—I am bent down in consciousness of deformity and defect : and, did I dwell on the reflections which fill me with distrust, I should lay down a burden too noble for me to bear. But you know, my hearers, that this supreme standard is an object of endless approach, not of instant realization ; that simply to keep it ever at the heart,—never to forget it,—to recur to it again and again after every failure,—and to hold it still faithfully up, regardless whom it may condemn,—is,—I will not say, all that should be required,—but at least an evidence of honest and unabated purpose. It has assuredly been my effort and resolve to keep near the fountains of truth and goodness : perhaps, too much by way of solitary thought, and communion with the great minds of the past, rather than with the lesser world abroad in the streets. But, you will allow for the diversities of gifts ; and will believe that the services least copiously rendered are those in which I have felt the least confidence of good. And this one thing gratitude requires me to say, that the good providence of God has, in some way and degree, supplied my manifold defects ; enabling us, at the end of this stage

of our career, to look round on a Society, not weakened in numbers, or, I trust, degenerate in spirit.

And now, my hearers, I look round for the last time,
upon a scene, more precious to me than any I shall see. Every week, as the sacred day comes round, will it rise before me, and mingle its picture with my prayers: I shall dwell upon the countenances and forms so dear; and wonder what answers would come, could I crowd upon you the enquiries of my heart. Others, too, as I now gaze back across the space of sixteen years,—others whom I do not see,—seem present here,—friends from whom local change can remove us no further now. In the face of that heavenly group,—of elders who have left to us a graver life; of children, who have been the saintly lustre of our homes; of comrades, who have helped us in our strife;—and, in the presence of that God, to whom all lands and times are equal; who dwells with us at our stations, and goes not from us on the pathless seas; who speaks to us in the wisdom and gentleness of strange tongues, but more sweetly far in the familiar music of our own; under whom, vicissitudes are but varieties of Providence, and afflictions but the shadows of Mercy; who is the same whether his light sleeps, as the morning, on our private homes, or streaks the atmosphere of continents with storm; who, having sweetened the communion of mortals, will inspire the communion of saints:—I close a

record which *may* never be reopened ; I leave it at the feet of Him I love and serve ;—I take of you a hopeful and grateful farewell ; and commend you to Him from whom our pathway is not hid.

ADDRESS, ON OCCASION OF LAYING THE FOUNDATION-
STONE OF A NEW CHURCH IN HOPE STREET, TUESDAY,
MAY 9TH, 1848.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CHRISTIANS,

There are times when those who are most distrustful of themselves lose for a while the depressing consciousness of fear and frailty, and are constrained, by the bright aspect of the present, to look upon the future with joy and hope. Even when standing at the solemn birth of a great undertaking, I cannot contradict the glorious sunshine above us, and the multitude of glad faces before me, by suffering any shadow of despondency to rest upon this moment. It is a happy augury for any enterprise, when its foundation descends to its place beneath an eye so steady and a hand so firm as those of our honoured friend.* Nor is this the only encouragement that cheers the day. If to have lasted long already is evidence for an institution that it will not speedily perish; if to have deep roots in the past affords promise of blossom and fruitage in the future; then we are not without assurance of a lasting blessing on our work. The memorials of a century and a half lie beneath that stone, and constitute the autobiography of our society. There is a singular mixture of resemblance and contrast between the present occasion and the corresponding period when the chapel in which we now worship was commenced. The newspapers just deposited in the vase contain tidings of recent revolution in a neighbouring country, whose fates, interesting to all thoughtful men, are doubly so to the descendant of an exiled Huguenot. And if, when the walls of Paradise-street chapel are levelled, any similar documents should be found beneath its corner-stone, they,—the journals of 1789,—will be filled with the traces of parallel events, then equally fresh and equally portentous. Yet there are grounds to hope that the intervening sixty years have not been lost on European society, and that many a folly of the receding generation will escape repetition now. The outskirts of the last century's great storm reached even the seclusion of our own societies. In September, 1791, the chapel which we still occupy was to have been opened by Dr. Priestley; but, two months before, he was driven by the madness of riot from the town which he adorned by his virtues, his philosophy, and his fame:

* Thomas Bolton, Esq.

"Patriot, and saint, and sage,
 Him full of years, from his lov'd native land,
 Statesmen blood-stained, and priests idolatrous,
 By dark lies maddening the blind multitude,
 Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying, he retired,
 And mused expectant on the coming years."

I see near me some venerable men, whose memory bears witness of that time; and others again so new to life, that its traditions sound like the old voice of history. When thus we link ourselves, on the right hand, with aged who can tell us of these things behind, and, on the left, with the child whose eye shall look forward no less far into the story of humanity, we seem to brood over a solemn expanse of time, and to feel upon the wing of our thought the breath of the 18th and the 20th century, as well as the sunshine of our own.

Under favour of this genial sky, I would detain you while I say something as to the principles and purposes to which this church is consecrated. Its claim and its disclaim concur, as I fully believe, to justify the hopes with which you will watch its rising walls.

We dedicate it to no *priestly offices*. No mystic rites, no discipline of the secret, no magic spells of salvation, will find a shelter here. The structure rising from this spot is not designed to interpose between the soul and God, but to bring them into intimate and personal communion; not to provide a sacerdotal medium of approach, but to shut out the secular causes of forgetfulness and separation. We build a place, not for the high altar, but for the humble spirit; where the worship will be, not *for* the people, but *by* them; where the minister appears as a man amongst men, conscious of their frailties, their sorrows, their aspirations, and, only through his sad partnership in these, able to interpret them aright in preaching, and, without pretence, acknowledge them in prayer. It is but by the sympathy of mind with mind, the attraction of like to like, that the lines of supplication from each separate and silent heart converge to the place in which he stands, and finding a representative spirit there, burst into open voice. We accept here the deposit of no man's faith; but will help him, if we can, to use the talent with a faithful trust.

We dedicate this place to no individual's teaching, and erect no throne for mere *personal influence*. A stranger has but to cast his eye upon the design of this building, to see that you are raising something nobler than a lecture-room, and are inspired with a reliance which no man's wisdom can receive. You have kept it in wholesome remembrance that, while teachers are transitory, the things to be taught are imperishable; and, in these days of giddy tastes and slight convictions, have brought

your homage still to the eternal essence of Christian truth, not to the accident of its mutable representation. You have provided for a permanent *society of persons*, bound together by common attachment to certain sentiments and purposes which will survive the lapse of successive lives and the vicissitudes of human admiration. Unworthy should we be of the freehold we have received from our fathers, did we think only of a life-interest for our children.

We dedicate our church to *no creed*. It is indeed most natural, indeed inevitable, that all the successive discoverers of new doctrine, and all its simple disciples, should hold it to be everlasting; should build temples, and organize enduring institutions, to serve as its receptacles. Did they for an instant allow that it might be perishable, they would suspect it to be false. Yet who can follow the history of Christendom—who observe the phenomena of any one period of intellectual activity—who even register the experience of his own mind—without a check to this unthinking faith? How plainly is it the law of Providence, that there shall be a perpetual change, be it cycle or be it progress, in the forms under which the same indestructible ideas operate in our nature! *It is time that this should be openly recognised as fact, and allowed for in our provisions for the future.* We therefore forego all attempt to fix the type of belief from age to age: and through such abstinence, we do conceive the inevitable movements of opinion are likely to take place, less by polemic convulsion than by peaceful development.

Not—let me be understood—that we are, individually, without definite belief; or, collectively, without a belief strongly marked by common characteristics. We do not pretend to be mere *seekers*, with a system awaiting us in the future. We are not drawn together by the sympathies of a universal unsettledness, and the resolve to discuss an indefinite series of open questions. No, we raise here, not a school, but a church; not a hall of debate, but a shrine of God; and shall collect, not a parliament of critics, but a brotherhood of worshipers. For this end there must be a faith in each not wandering far from the faith of all. Only where there is essentially *one* heart and mind can the many find themselves represented by the breathings of a single spirit. We do not look, therefore, for the presence of various creeds *together*; we simply offer no hindrance to their appearing *successively*. And as we possess not our own acquisitions only, but a heritage from predecessors; as we build, not for ourselves alone, but for our descendants; as our society runs through generations, constant indeed in their religion, but variable (may I say, *progressive*?) in their theology; we presume not to impress our own peculiarities on this church. We own the partnership of other ages in the baptism and character of this place, and will not forfeit our

affinity with the ancient and the unborn to gratify the egotism of a sect. Let it not be said that we want a refuge for vagueness of conviction, an excuse for cowardice of profession. We *know* what we believe; we *love* what we believe; we plainly *tell* what we believe. I am a Unitarian; you, who will meet here from week to week, are doubtless Unitarian too; but the society of worshipers, of which we are only the *living* members, and the Church erected here, of which we shall be but *transient* tenants, these are *not* to be defined as Unitarian. To stamp them with such doctrinal name, would be to perform an act of posthumous expulsion against many noble dead whom it is an honour to revere; and perhaps to provoke against ourselves, from a future age, the retribution of a like excommunication. In refusing to commit our churches to a determinate system, we protest against the imputation of the least indifference to truth. We simply carry out, in affairs of religion, the rule which is followed in all wise endowments for the advancement of knowledge, and provision for the administration of states. Institutes of Science and halls of learning are created, not to sustain the theories of their day, however earnestly adopted by the first founders; but in the assurance that Nature and the human intellect will ever seek to converse together, and that a place which aids their meeting will be a welcome heritage to any age. The structure of Government is raised, not to preserve irrevocably the political doctrines, or even the constitutional traditions, which makes a nation's momentary faith; but in simple reliance on the permanent need of human weakness for control, and the demand of the human conscience for Law. And why may not our Churches rise, not in blind expectation of perpetuity for the present types and classifications of theology, but in pure faith that God and the human soul will ever seek each other; and that, so long as Heavenly Mercy shall stoop, and earthly aspiration rise, a court of audience for trust and prayer cannot be obsolete?

Do you ask me, then, to desist from the negative language of disclaimer, and to say positively what *is* the ground and principle of our undertaking? I reply—A church is set up to embody and preserve a perfect image or ideal of human life. It is ultimately based upon the fact, that in each man there is a strife between his reality and his conception—between his temptations and his resolves—between the actual to which he descends, and the possible to which he climbs. The theatre of the one we call “the world;” the refuge of the other we call “the church.” Were we surrendered without reserve to the crush of labour and the weariness of care; did the voice of our kind never speak but in the cries of the market and the greetings of the street; were our days unmarked by any purer chalk than the scores of business, and our

towns unrelieved by loftier structures than the dwelling, the office, and the shop,—the truest, deepest, most authoritative part of our nature would be without expression, would become faint and latent in many, and would live but for sorrow in the few, with whom it could not die. We stand here this day to forbid that sad issue. We create here a centre and shrine for our highest sentiments. This is to be a converging point for the scattered lights of love and hope and faith, that come athwart us in the path of our cares or the darkness of our griefs. Here is the focus of our worship—without passage through whose atmosphere, without refraction through whose tears, no tint of glory, no painted bow of promise, would ever touch the leaden clouds of our experience. In whatever way men own the authority, and find the aliment, of these devout convictions and aspirations, and associate for the expression of them, there is a *Church*.

And that is specifically a *Christian* church which accepts Jesus of Nazareth as (under the limitations of humanity) the *realization of this ideal*, the blending point of historical fact and divine perfection. For those who thus accept him, the eye of reverence becomes fixed in content. The craving imagination, roving over the universe for constituent atoms of moral truth and heavenly beauty, is restrained: veneration and love can stay at home, and sit at the feet of the domestic prophet of this dear world. Not that we need, as Christians, blind our hearts to any fresh admirations, read history or life with a critic's superciliousness, and shut up the Pantheon of our natural homage. On the contrary, he who has most discernment of supreme perfection, will have the quickest sense of all other good. But still there will be no passionate quest of objects to satiate the fever of the heart; no straining of the eye, as across a desert-world, to detect the cooling spring; no mistake of the mocking mirage for the pure lake. He that hath drank of the living water shall never thirst again. This, and no servile self-surrender, is the true and only "rest in the church."

In a word, then, we unite for advancement of the *Christian Life*. The whole sphere of our thought we would bring into harmony with the image of Christ's mind: in our worship, looking up through it to God; in our efforts of will, lifting ever nearer to it both ourselves and the world. The scope of a church, like the sweep of conscience, is all-comprehensive:—to perfect the life personal, domestic, industrial, political, social,—I claim it *all* as the aim of the heavenly law which seeks expression here. And in the mere fact of *association* for this end, there is an acknowledgment by each member that *others can aid him* to perfect the highest relations of his life. He owns that they are not wholly at the disposal of his private self-will. He renounces the free-

dom to do as he likes, and asks at once *liberty and help* to do as he ought; not liberty for himself against others, but help from others against himself. Here, then,—that truth may keep its health,—may there ever be free teaching and free learning! Here,—that duty may hold its gentleness,—may internal provision be made that the strong shall help the weak; and,—that it may not lose its courage,—may hearty protests be uttered against external wrongs, and a welcome to the birth of every good! Here,—that piety may resume its divine ascendancy,—may only guileless worship be paid, and true interpreters be found of the sorrows and aspirations of good hearts.

In such an attempt to organize the Christian life, there is nothing *exclusive*; and in the cluster of neighbouring churches that look down upon us here, we discern only a fraternity of coadjutors whose work,—a part of the same husbandry of God,—lies in a field our tillage cannot reach. In such attempt, moreover, there is nothing *temporary and perishable*. It is insured by the laws of our nature and the providence of God. Amid the imposing growth of material wealth and pride, it is not unseasonable to remember that *temple-architecture* is the oldest in the world, and to ask, after so impressive a vindication of its longevity, whether, having been the earliest, it may not prove the latest term of human civilization. I am persuaded that so it will be. For there is in the soul of man “a temple not made with hands,” which demands and shapes forth the visible structure as its shell of life; which is ever fresh amid the change and wreck of ages, and can build again from the ruins of the past; indeed, the hidden cloister of whose worship will remain still open, and thrill with higher strains, when time and its structures shall be no more.

DISCOURSES

ON OCCASION OF

THE DEDICATION

OF

HOPE-STREET NEW CHURCH,

LIVERPOOL,

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1849.

BY

REV. THOMAS MADGE.

REV. JAMES MARTINEAU.

REV. CHARLES WICKSTEED.

LONDON:

JOHN CHAPMAN, 142, STRAND.

MDCCCXLIX.

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PREFACE.

THE occasion of the following Discourses was naturally one of great interest to the Society in whose service they were prepared. At the entrance of a new era in its congregational history, it seemed fit that some comprehensive expression should be given to the aims which it proposes to realise, and the views of life which distinguish its interpretation of Christianity. The immediate request for the publication of the Sermons justifies the hope that they fairly represent the state of mind and purpose with which the new Church is entered by its possessors; and that they may stand as a record of the time and connexion to which they belong. This circumstance gives to them a value not due to any intrinsic qualities of their own; and induces the preachers to consign them to a permanent form, less as original expressions of divine truth, than as marks in the ever-changing course of human sentiment.

November 14, 1849.

THE DEDICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE TO THE
WORSHIP AND SERVICE OF GOD.

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18TH, 1849,

By THOMAS MADGE,

MINISTER OF ESSEX STREET CHAPEL.

LONDON;
PRINTED BY RICHARD KINDER,
GREEN ARBOUR COURT, OLD BAILEY.

A SERMON.

ALREADY, my brethren, as it was meet that it should be so, has the voice which has so often given utterance to the devout sentiments of your hearts, and to which, after a period of silence, you must rejoice again to listen,*—already, I say, has that voice breathed forth the prayer of thanksgiving and the prayer of supplication becoming the occasion on which we are now assembled. Nevertheless, I cannot enter upon that part which has been allotted to me of this day's service without once more beseeching Him whose favour is the primal source of all illumination, of all truth, and goodness, and happiness, to look mercifully upon us at this time, and graciously accept our humble endeavours to glorify his holy name. The words which I have chosen as introductory to the observations which I have now to address to you are taken from

Acts i. 13, 14.

“And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, with the other apostles. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”

* The devotional services were introduced by the Rev. James Martineau, the Minister of the Church, who, since his return from the continent after an absence of more than a year, had now, for the first time, presented himself to his congregation.

Most interesting and affecting must this first meeting of the apostles and their companions have been after the trying scenes through which they had lately passed, and the dispersion of that cloud of doubts, and fears, and anxieties, which had so heavily hung over them. From the deep depression into which their minds had sunk as they fled from the garden of Gethsemane and the tragedy of the Cross, they had now risen into a state of hopeful, joyful expectation. For a brief season they had given up all as lost. They disappeared from the public eye, and it seemed, for a moment, as if a life of privacy and retirement were henceforth the life most fitting for them to lead. But the sudden re-appearance among them of their risen and now ascended Lord dispelled their growing despondency, revived their expiring hopes, brought them again upon the open stage of life, and imparted to them fortitude and courage, patience and perseverance, untiring and unconquerable, in testifying to the truth of what they had seen and heard. It was when their hearts were thus re-assured, and their confidence was more than restored, that they assembled together in the upper room mentioned in the text, to call to mind those words and deeds of power and of love of which they had recently been the admiring witnesses,—to bow down in grateful acknowledgements before God for the glorious issue of their Master's labours and sufferings in his triumphant resurrection from the dead,—and to invoke the divine blessing upon their own future labours in the Christian cause. Here they had met to commune with one another on the new and important relation into which they had just entered, and the obligations and duties to which it summoned them. Hitherto, for the purposes of religious worship and instruction, they had assembled with their Jewish

brethren in the temple or the synagogue. Now they were associated together, expressly and purposely, as Christians, to dwell upon their Christian blessings and privileges, and to present unto God their thanksgivings and supplications in the name and as the disciples of Christ. This meeting, therefore, may be regarded as the type of all future churches, as indicating the purpose for which they were designed, and the end to which they should be subservient. It teaches us that, in entering the Christian temple, we should enter there to sit at the feet of Christ and learn of him ; to meditate with the men of Galilee on mortality and immortality ; and to unite our voices, in one blended song of praise and thanksgiving, that so they may go up in accepted chorus to the throne of God. Honourable alike is it, my friends, to your feelings and principles that it was in your heart, as it has been in your power, to raise up this beautiful structure for yourselves and families to worship in—devoting it, not to the interests and fashion of a world that passeth away, but to the interests and welfare of that higher life which shall not pass away.

In this place, then, we have nothing to do with the wisdom of the schools, with the doctrines of human philosophy, or the speculations of human ingenuity. I deny not that in other places, and at other times, they may well and properly occupy some share of your thoughts and attention, but here we have greater and more important topics to dwell upon, higher questions to resolve, a nobler science to learn, more grave and solemn lessons to attend to.

The first and greatest truth with which we are here concerned is the existence and government of God. That he is, and that he is the rewarder of all who truly and

diligently seek him, is a proposition of momentous import, upon the reception or rejection of which awful and momentous consequences are made to depend. But with the *nature* of God we must necessarily be totally unacquainted. It is a subject embracing heights which we cannot ascend, and depths which we cannot fathom. What the divine essence is, or in what manner God exists, is one of those things which are properly termed mysterious. It is hidden from our sight. It belongs not to us to inquire into it. It forms no part of our knowledge or of our belief. It lies completely out of the sphere of our understandings. But there is one truth concerning the divine existence which it is not difficult for us to conceive of, nor unimportant for us to believe. It is a truth for which reason and revelation both earnestly plead ; and it is a truth which the history of the world shows to be intimately associated with the virtue and the happiness of man. That God is one ; that he has no equal, no rival, but reigns absolute and alone, power above all powers, is the great pervading doctrine both of the Old Testament and the New.

We, therefore, dedicate this Church to the worship of one only God.

With the doctrine of the Divine Unity there is closely connected in the gospel of Christ that of God's paternal character. It tells us that as we came from him we are dear to him ; that as he is our Father, so we are his children. It assures us that he has not only given us all things richly to enjoy, causing his sun to shine and his rain to descend, that the earth might give her increase and bring forth food for the service of man, but that even darkness, and storms, and tempests, are his messengers for good, that his afflictions are in kindness sent, and that

he chastens us for our benefit. It speaks of God as our almighty friend who ever careth for us, and who, in calling us into the ways of piety and virtue, calls us to the nearer and more perfect enjoyment of himself. It assures us that as in love God made us, so in love he sent Jesus Christ to redeem us, that with him there is no respect of persons, that what he demands of one he demands of all, that he pities our infirmities and hath compassion upon them that love him, and that all who sincerely repent of their sins will be equally the objects of his forgiving mercy. These are glorious, delightful revelations of Almighty God, well fitted to cheer and encourage the good, to reclaim the bad from the error of their ways, and to melt the hard and obdurate heart into penitence and submission.

We dedicate this Church to the service of God the Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In accordance with the view presented to us by our Saviour of the character of God, is the representation made by him of the duty of man. When asked what was necessary to be done in order to secure the gift of eternal life, he answered plainly and distinctly, "Keep the commandments; love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself; this do, and thou shalt live." And when the Scribe acquiesced in this declaration, and acknowledged that there was no God but one, and that He alone was entitled to the supreme homage and affection of his creatures, Jesus turned to him and said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven." In like manner, when he gave to his followers a test of true discipleship, it was not subscription to an unmeaning creed, the adoption of some mysterious dogma, but it was the practical

application of the precept, Love one another. “By this,” said he, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.” Wherever he saw piety associated with charity, there he recognised the only bond by which man is connected with heaven, “the only step or link for intercourse with God.” “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Impressive and beautiful, however, as these words of our Lord are, it is in his life still more than in his words that we see and feel the power and the beauty of the doctrines which he taught. Thus explained and illustrated, they become clothed with a touching sense of reality and truth. They speak to the soul with a voice of power to which all its purer feelings beat responsive. When I see how he went about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and ministering to the sorrows of the sorrowful, how he pitied the erring and sought to reclaim the wandering, what compassion he had on the multitude and what sympathy he felt for their distresses,—when I see him mingling with the despised and neglected of his race, and braving the misrepresentations and calumnies of his enemies in his efforts to raise up the fallen and to comfort the miserable,—when I look at the treatment which he observed towards the penitent, and perceive how gentle and merciful it was, and that to the contrite spirit he ever turned an eye of encouragement and hope,—when I thus contemplate the conduct of Jesus, and remember that he appeared on earth as the image and representative of the Most High, I feel that his life is, indeed, the best of teachers and instructors, that it leaves upon the mind an impression of what God is, and man should be, such as

even his own gracious words would alone have failed to impart. Our duty, then, as it respects our Maker, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves, lies clearly and plainly before us. The gospel relieves us of all difficulty and dissipates all doubt. From its pages may be heard the voice of Jesus, saying to us, Hither come, this is the way of truth and righteousness. Whosoever followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

We dedicate this Church to a righteous and holy God, who sent his Son Jesus Christ to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

From what has now been said you will perceive that Christianity does not present us with cold and comfortless abstractions, fitted to the entertainment of the speculative understanding, but that it brings before us those relations which connect us immediately with God, and the contemplation of which is adapted to touch and engage our hearts, to warm and enliven our affections, to awaken virtuous emotions, and to prompt to virtuous actions. It does not send us to struggle with conceptions too mighty for our grasp, but it places before us those sublime and simple truths, which, while they are intelligible to the humblest understanding, interest and delight the loftiest mind. To refine and elevate our souls, to lift us above the meannesses and littlenesses of earth, and to give us longings for the glories and satisfactions of heaven, our eyes have been opened to see the things which the wisest of ancient days desired to see, but were not able. Jesus Christ has torn away the veil by which the human mind was once shrouded in darkness and doubt, and let in upon our souls the discovery not only of that which will inform and instruct our understandings, but of that also which

will lighten the pressure of grief and relax the bondage of despair.

Much as on this account it becomes us to prize the gospel, we have yet still more reason to prize it for the clear and explicit assurance which it contains, and for the confirmation which that assurance receives in the resurrection of Christ, that we shall live again, that this world is not the last stage of our existence, but one to prepare us for another and a better. Were I asked what, more than anything else, is needed to make man what he should be, to give him courage in the profession of what is true, and firmness in the practice of what is right ; to make him, in all his ways and doings, pure-minded and single-hearted, uncorruptible by temptation and unconquerable by sin,—my answer would be, the doctrine of a future everlasting life, such as is brought before us in the revelation of Jesus Christ. No man who truly admits it into his thoughts, but must feel its great, its inestimable value. In all states and conditions of our being, whether we are cast down by misfortune, or whether sorrowing for the loss of friends, what more blessed source of peace and consolation can be opened to us than the anticipation of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. And when we ourselves are stretched on the bed of death,—when the last dark hour of mortality approaches, and weeping friends gather around us to take their solemn farewell,—what is the doctrine we value then ? What is the hope to which we then cling,—what the prospect upon which we then dwell ? At such a moment, do we concern ourselves with questions about the divine essence, or with distinctions in the divine nature ? Oh ! no. To the one only question then in our minds, “ When man dieth and giveth up the ghost, where is he ? ” the answer

of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever believeth in me shall never die," is all sufficient. This, —this satisfies the heart and gives rest to the soul.

With glad and grateful spirits, therefore, we dedicate this Church to the Author and Giver of Eternal Life, to Him who hath given us the victory over death and the grave through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The views of which I have now presented to you the merest outline, constitute the common faith of Christians; and to those who cordially embrace them, they afford every help and every encouragement that can be given to the mind of man when struggling with the evils and adversities that here assail him. Some of the wisest and best men that have ever lived have been distinguished for their attachment to this common faith. Yes, among Christian professors of this enlarged and liberal school are to be found those who have daily and hourly walked with God; the consciousness of whose presence has been to them the sanctifier of their inward thoughts and the guardian of their outward actions; men, whom the seductions of pleasure could not tempt, nor the terrors of suffering drive from the path of duty; men, whose great object in life was to do the will of God, and who, for this purpose, pressed right on in spite of every advancing difficulty and every surrounding danger, and who, when the summons of death arrived, fixed their thoughts upon that heaven, the promised inheritance of the wise and good, and so departed in peace and hope. Many are the men of this stamp and character who have been found in all churches. Take, I would say, Fenelon from the Roman Catholics; Jeremy Taylor, and Barrow, and Tillotson from the Church of England; Locke, and Newton, and Hartley from among the ranks of Christian philosophers;

and Doddridge, and Foster, and Price, and Priestley from the various classes of Dissenters ; and you will find that the great principles which they most valued and cherished—those principles which were the actuating motives of their conduct, and which shed upon their souls refreshing dews of joy and of hope—were the principles which they held in common, that is, were the principles by which we, as a Christian body, are emphatically distinguished. Now these principles we are desirous of upholding in their simplicity and integrity ; of preserving in their singleness and purity, apart from all admixture with foreign ingredients. We look upon the vital, essential truths of Christianity to be those which are possessed, not by any one sect exclusively, but which belong to the church of Christ universally. Our peculiarity therefore—if so it may be called—that which separates us from other bodies of professing Christians, consists mainly in this, in the *prominence* and *distinction* which we give to these truths ; in regarding them as of supreme and paramount importance ; as, in fact, the be-all and the end-all of the Christian dispensation. We hold the catholic or universal faith to be the true genuine Christian faith, and the only one that should be made a condition of Christian communion. It is upon this broad ground that we take our stand as a Christian society. It is upon this wide foundation that the fellowship of our churches is based. Ever sacred be this temple to the cause of religious freedom, of piety, peace, and charity !

Of all the bonds by which man is connected with man, the first and the greatest is that which unites them all to the Creator. If there be anything more than another which belongs to us in common, in which we are all one, it is that of being the creatures of God, subsisting by his

will, depending upon his bounty, daily witnesses of his majesty and might, daily partakers of his kindness and care. Receiving common mercies, it is reasonable that we should unite in common acknowledgements. With the same reasons for thankfulness and praise, it becomes us to mingle our songs with the songs of our brethren, and in sacred union and fellowship to pour out our prayers and supplications together. Like the good men of old, it becomes us to go to the house of God in company, and, with the purest influences of heaven, to mingle the dearest sanctities of earth. For this let us welcome the return of each Sabbath morn, inviting us to suspend for a while the chase after worldly gains and pleasures, and opening to our inward sight the vision of an immortal heaven.

There are, I know, those who say that they need not the ministrations of the sanctuary to remind them of their relation to God and eternity, to silence the clamour of worldly passions and pursuits, and to beget in them a genuine religious thoughtfulness. They can commune with their own hearts, they tell us, in the stillness of their chamber, or go forth, like the patriarch Isaac, to meditate in the fields at even-tide. I believe, however, that for the most part they who talk in this way do neither the one nor the other. Gallio-like, they are careless about these things, and make their objection to time and place which has its deeper foundation in their own indifference. This observation, I willingly grant, may not be applicable to all of the class of whom I am now speaking. There are instances among them, I doubt not, where the spirit, in its moments of high-wrought emotion, may think that it can safely dispense with all external helps and supports,—may even regard them as suited only to ignorant

and feeble minds,—may imagine that its piety need not be poured forth in words,—that human language only restrains, cramps, and confines it,—that time and place are but hindrances and barriers to its exercise, and that “wrapt into still communion with God, it will rise far above all the imperfect offices of prayer and praise.” Now admitting that there are a few gifted minds capable of rising by the force of their own wills into the high regions of pure spirituality, and that occasionally inclinations and desires, looking in the same direction, may be partially felt by a few more, it is not to be believed, I think, that such a state of feeling can be either general or lasting. On the contrary, I am persuaded that most men’s experience will convince them that in the cultivation and exercise of their religious principles and affections they must have recourse to much the same means of exciting and improving them that are employed in the formation and exercise of their affections and habits generally.

Humanity does not become changed, is not stripped of the attributes by which it is usually characterised and distinguished the moment it touches the ground of religion. It still possesses the same tendencies and is subject to the same laws by which it is commonly influenced and governed. As we feel the value, the comfort, and the happiness of the social affections in all other things, I cannot understand the wisdom or the propriety of refusing their aid and co-operation in the concerns of religion. We are sustained, strengthened and cheered in our convictions and attachments by the presence and communion of our fellow-men. In the midst of the animating associations of the church and the radiating sympathies of other minds, we gather encouragement, confidence, and assur-

ance. It is therefore a great error to suppose that a different process must be pursued in building up in our minds the fabric of religion from that which is adopted in raising any other of our intellectual and moral structures. It is not in enthusiastic sentiments and fervid emotions that we must place our trust. Suddenly may they come, and as suddenly may they depart. Our chief reliance must be founded on the diligent and faithful use of all those appliances by which the heart of man is usually impressed and affected. The dread of superstition and the contempt of vain and idle ceremonies have, I am persuaded, led many to an undue depreciation and disparagement of the outward means and instruments of exciting and elevating our religious sensibilities. There is no doubt that abundance of mischief has been done by overloading religion with rites and observances. There is no doubt that the external garb and covering has been too often mistaken for the genuine inward grace, and that dead, inanimate forms have been substituted for the living spiritual substance. Too much care and caution, therefore, cannot be used to guard against such a perversion as this. But when that care has been taken and that caution has been exercised, let us beware of falling into the error, less pernicious, perhaps, but still an error to be deplored, of supposing that the religious principle can be built up and firmly maintained in the soul under a total disregard and neglect of those assistances and supports of which, upon other occasions, we are glad to avail ourselves.

We read of the prophet Daniel that, during the time of his captivity in Babylon, when he prayed and gave thanks before his God, his mind seems to have been impressed by the circumstance that the windows of his

chamber opened towards Jerusalem. Now this is an instance of the manner in which we are sometimes affected by little things,—by things, in themselves considered, of no importance, but which derive all their interest and influence from the thoughts and feelings associated with them. He whom Daniel worshipped was the same God and as ready to listen to the prayer of his servant whether his eyes were bent on Babylon's plains, or turned towards Judea's hills. Apart from the feelings called forth by them, it mattered not which of these it was. But who does not perceive that, with the thought of Jerusalem and the tender and solemn recollections which that thought would awaken, there would necessarily come over the mind of Daniel a more intense and vivid feeling of God's presence and power, of his presence to cheer and his power to save? Tell me not that such a feeling betokens a state of pitiable weakness. For, if it be a weakness, it is one which God has attached to the very constitution of our nature, and above which the proudest pretender to philosophy, falsely so called, cannot exalt himself. Will he say that no peculiar interest hangs around the spot where he has played in his childhood or sported in his youth? Has no place ever become endeared to his thoughts and consecrated in his imagination by friendship and affection? Can you visit the tomb where a parent sleeps, or walk over the ashes of the child you loved, with the same emotions with which you would tread on common ground? Then times and places *do* exercise a power over our thoughts and feelings to which we are all of us, in some measure, subject and obedient. It is a law of our very being, and resistance to it would be as impotent in its efforts, as it is vain and foolish in its aim. And why, we may ask, why should man be

treated in his religious capacity in a manner totally different from that which is observed towards him in all his other relations? From the reasoning and conduct of some people in this matter it might be inferred that with reference to the subject of religion they contemplated man as a being who had neither senses to be exercised, nor imaginations to be affected, nor feelings to be touched, nor hearts to be impressed. They would take him out of the circle of all those influences which, in other respects, so powerfully move and govern him. They would deprive him of the benefit of those associations which, on all ordinary occasions, form one of the chief sources of interest and attraction. Such a proceeding I cannot but deprecate as both unnatural and unreasonable; implying equally a forgetfulness of what the real condition of man is, and of what is taught us in the lessons of experience. If the love of country will grow stronger and warmer when standing before the shrine of her illustrious dead, or when gazing upon the scenes of her former greatness and glory, why should we not admit that the feelings of devotion may also be raised and strengthened in a similar manner, by going to the house of God in company, and uniting with our brethren in those sacred services which impressively speak to us of the glories of creating power and the riches of redeeming love? Let not Religion be deprived of all those accompaniments which are calculated to enliven her sentiments and to render her services more beautiful and attractive. Let us view ourselves on all sides. Let us consider what is due to us as thinking, reflecting beings, and what may be needful for us as sensitive and imaginative creatures. And when we feel inclined to treat as superfluous and vain all outward aids and influences to further the ends

of religion,—to think that all regard to times and places may be utterly discarded, and that our minds are strong enough to elevate and sustain themselves without such instrumentalities; when we are disposed to reason in this manner, it would be well for us to remember the words of Christ, “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,” and instead of presumptuously relying on our own imagined strength, to feel more humbly concerning ourselves, and to be careful to put on the whole armour of God, so that in the day of trial we may be able to stand, to be firm and faithful, enduring to the end.

Our failure in duty, our neglect of the things belonging to our eternal peace, arises, generally speaking, far more from insensibility and thoughtlessness than from absolute ignorance. We need, therefore, to be told, not so much of what we do *not* know, as to be reminded of what we *do*; to have the dormant energies of our souls roused from their degrading, destructive torpor, into watchfulness and vigour; to have the genuine feelings and principles of our nature called into activity and exertion, and those truths which lie, as it were, upon the surface of our minds, impressed deeply upon our hearts, and wrought into the web of our affections. One of our greatest aims should be to rescue admitted truths from the neglect caused by the very circumstance of their universal admission. Truths, says Coleridge, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as so true, that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors. If the principles which we hold, fail of prompting to virtuous conduct, of generating kind and devout affections, of making the life pure and holy, it is not because they

are intrinsically unfitted to produce these effects, but it is because they are not sufficiently rooted and grounded in the mind to be capable of sending forth strong, vigorous shoots of morality and piety. It cannot be, that while our faith exists thus loosely in the head without drawing the least nourishment from the fountains of the heart,—while it is a mere chance outward profession, and not a real inward conviction,—a cold abstract speculation, into which there does not enter a single warm affection of the soul,—it cannot be, that, while it exists in such a form and under such a condition as this, any very valuable or precious fruits should be gathered from it. The fault, however, lies not in the principles which we profess to believe, but in not truly and heartily believing the principles which we profess. Now the design and tendency of the services of this place is to excite within us those recollections of God and of Christ, of our duty and destiny, of our condition as men, and of our hopes as Christians, which cannot come frequently before the mind without rendering it, in some degree, purer and better and happier.

I am not ignorant that complaints are sometimes made that the range of topics to which the preacher restricts himself is too narrow and circumscribed to satisfy the thoughtful and inquiring. Hence there are those who seem to be desirous that other questions should be introduced here than those of a strictly religious character. Now while I admit that, in many cases, there is just ground for complaining that the discourses of the pulpit are trite and uninteresting, I must, at the same time, contend that this is owing, not to the nature of the subjects treated of, but to the manner in which they are treated. Bring to their treatment judgement and imagi-

nation, genius and sensibility,—such, my friends, as you are no strangers to,—or, to say nothing of rare endowments, let the speaker, if he be possessed only of ordinary qualifications, give forth what is in him with simplicity and earnestness, and with a heart penetrated with the love of God and goodness, and it will, I think, no longer be found wanting in interest or impressiveness. I cannot agree, therefore, with those who are for including among the themes to be discoursed of here, questions of government and politics, of literature and science. I know well the exciting nature of these topics, and the resources which they supply for strong impression and immediate effect. But we assemble within these walls for other purposes than amusement and excitement. We have a more momentous and solemn end to answer, that of awakening the soul to its obligations and its hopes, as the creature of God and the child of eternity. With so many means and opportunities around us for acquiring all kinds of information, literary, scientific, and political, it were, as it seems to me, a wanton desecration of the purpose for which this temple is reared, to divert and alienate the little portion of time to be spent in it from its directly religious ministration. Considering the absorbing nature of the things that press upon our senses, and the almost constant immersion of our minds in the cares and pursuits of this world, it surely is not too much to ask that our thoughts and affections should, for a few moments in the week, be withdrawn from these solitudes and engagements, and be devoted exclusively to the spiritual and immortal concerns of our being. Of course I am taking it for granted that we have spiritual and immortal concerns; that out of and beyond this world lie treasures of knowledge and stores of enjoyment, with

which the wisdom and the gladness of the present moment are not worthy to be compared. If it be so, most fitting and reasonable is it that we should be awakened from our dreams of vanity, and be made to feel that earth is not all, nor man the mere tenant of an hour, but that when the night of the grave is past, the dawn of an endless day shall burst upon him, and he shall spring forth the denizen of a new and nobler community. We come here to think of these things, to meditate on this high and holy destination of our being, and upon the feelings, purposes and actions which are its required and appropriate accompaniments. We come here to listen to the voice which speaks to us of a better and more enduring substance than meets our bodily eyes; of hopes which are unfading, and of joys which are imperishable; of communions and friendships which time will not impair and which death will not interrupt. We come here to have our minds enlightened with the wisdom which is profitable to direct; to have our hearts touched, as it were, with a live coal from the altar of God, that even when we quit the precincts of the temple, a purifying and invigorating warmth may still be felt glowing within us. We come here to break that continuity of little and low cares in which the world almost necessarily involves us, and to fasten upon our souls the links of a chain which embraces in its circuit wider views and loftier interests. In a word, we come here as weak, dependent, sinful, dying creatures, to be reminded of what, as such, it becomes us to be and to do; to be reminded of the power that made us, of the goodness that supports us, of the mercy that saves us, and of the heaven that awaits us. We come, the weak to be strengthened, the careless to be warned, the erring to be corrected, the sorrowful to

be comforted, the penitent to be soothed and encouraged, and all to have the spirit of their minds renewed, and to receive fresh impulse to run with patience the race that is set before us. The object for which we assemble on the "day of the Lord" is not to pamper the appetite, ever greedy for something new, for something that may play around the head, but which comes not near the heart. It is rather to call attention to truths already acknowledged, but not sufficiently dwelt upon, not sufficiently admitted into the homes and intimacies of our spiritual nature. It is to draw near and make bright to the inward eye, views and prospects which lie clouded in the distance. It is to make that felt within us as a warm and living reality which too often dwells without us as a cold and lifeless abstraction. It is to assist us in lifting up our hearts unto God, and to make us feel that in his favour there is life, and that his loving-kindness is better than life. It is, that seeing we may see, and hearing we may hear, what God hath done for our souls, and that the glad tidings of the gospel may not lie before us as a dead letter, but may be "felt in the blood and felt along the heart, and passing into our purer minds with tranquil restoration."

I repeat then,—it is not for the gratification of the speculative understanding that we are to assemble here as a congregation of Christian worshippers, but the lighting up in our souls of desires and aspirations which may lead us, when we retire from this place, to commune with our own spirits, and to make diligent search whether they are in the state in which they ought to be,—in the state becoming their distinguished privileges, worthy of their high descent, and befitting their heavenly destination. If the result of our weekly communion should be to send us away in-

quiring within ourselves what shall we do to be saved, a real and substantial good will be obtained by it, a blessing conferred infinitely surpassing any other which it could be the means of imparting. Let me observe also that, important as I consider just views and correct opinions on the subject of religion to be, more especially those which relate to the character and will of God, I must, nevertheless, not omit to remind you that it is of more consequence to feel right than even to think right ; to do well than to reason well ; that the best orthodoxy is the orthodoxy of the heart, and that while sentiments and creeds and systems perish, the best and purest feelings of the human soul remain unchanged ; the same in all countries, sects and generations, and so will continue to remain as long as the relations of man to God and of God to man have any existence. Doing righteously, living virtuously, carrying into the world a pure and a gentle and an elevated spirit, this is the beauty of holiness, and the excellence of faith, this is the bright consummate flower, the end, the crown, and the ornament of the whole.

Feeling it, then, to be our duty to gather ourselves together for the pure and spiritual worship of God, let us gratefully remember the blessed and benignant character under which the object of our worship is brought before us in the generous and merciful dispensation of the New Testament. Let us be thankful that we have a religion so pure, benevolent and holy ; so glorious in its doctrines, so precious in its promises, so beautiful in its hopes. Let us rejoice that we are ever in the sight of God, and that the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. Let us cheer and comfort ourselves with the welcome assurance that all who do his com-

mandments shall eat of the tree of life, and live for ever ; that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth ; and that no humble contrite spirit shall go forsaken of its God. In the presence of such a being let there be banished from our minds all desponding and despairing thoughts. Let us come and kneel before the Lord our Maker in the spirit of filial affection and in the confidence of filial trust. In deep submission let us bend before Him in whose hands our life is, and whose are all our ways. Humbly and meekly let us adore Him ; joyfully and reverently let us praise Him ; making melody in our hearts as well as with our tongues. And since we have all one Father, let us bear in mind that we are one family, bound to render to each other mutual assistance and comfort. To our piety, therefore, there must be added charity—to the love of God there must be joined the love of man. Let these be the offerings with which we approach the altar of the Lord. Let us consecrate this house of prayer by the humble mind, the worshipping spirit, the devout heart, the grateful thanksgiving which we bring to it ; and then peace within and hope in the favour of heaven will sweeten the days of our earthly pilgrimage, till, fit for a purer world of love and blessedness, we pass on from this perishable temple to that eternal temple not made with hands, where at a nobler altar we shall offer up to God a nobler worship, where we shall unite our feeble voices to those of adoring millions, and sing his praises everlastingly.

To you, the members of this congregation, and to him whom you have chosen to be here the leader of your devotions and the expounder of Christian duty, I would now offer my cordial congratulations at the completion of that work and labour of love which stands before us,

together with my earnest wishes that you may long be spared to assemble under this roof, mutual helpers of each other's joy. On the one hand, may you, my brethren, rejoice in the privilege of possessing a Teacher so richly endowed and so thoroughly accomplished to instruct you in all things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven ; and, on the other, may my friend, your valued and beloved minister, have the happiness of seeing that the work of the Lord prospers in his hands, and that through his instrumentality many have been made wise to the salvation of their souls. So may you both have reason to be thankful that you came up hither to keep the holy day, and may the intercourses in which you have delighted here be renewed and perfected in that land where dwell for ever the spirits of the just.

THE WATCH-NIGHT LAMPS.

A DISCOURSE,

PREACHED ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF PUBLIC WORSHIP,

(OCTOBER 21, 1849,)

IN

HOPE-STREET NEW CHURCH,
LIVERPOOL.

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU,

MINISTER OF THE CHURCH.

THE WATCH-NIGHT LAMPS.

Now does the Heavenly Mercy rebuke all my fears. The long-imagined moment is really come; God restores us to each other. Beneath his eye we parted, and before his face we meet; and that Infinite Light scatters the lingering shadows of misgiving which have hung around the forecast of this hour. We have not hoped in vain that He would remove with us to the shrine we have devoutly raised; and now in his eternal memory he sets the vows and prayers by which this new opportunity is to be consecrated or condemned. In distant lands, through waiting months, my eye has rested upon this day; which has appeared as a star of hope behind the perspective of every scene, and looked down, with a clear and guiding sanctity, on intervening tracts that had sometimes no other, and *never* a diviner, ray. Standing here at length, and looking round on this strange mixture of the new and old,—the outward structure new and beautiful, the living temple of faithful hearts both old and dearer far,—First, I greet you with all the warmth of my affection and the fresh devotion of all my powers; consecrating myself anew to the service, not indeed of your will,—but of your faith and highest hope, your love and conscience, your remorse and aspiration,—

which you know to be interpreters of a Will that must be monarch of your own. Next, I remember some, whom we had thought to have with us as sharers of our joy, but whom the voice of our salutation can no longer reach. Those close-filled ranks cannot hide from me the vacancies in their midst ; and I miss *here* the sweet attentive look of maidenly docility,—*there* the dear and venerable form of one from whose eyes age had exhausted the vision but not the tears, and whose features were quickened and kindled by the light within. Greeting to others, Farewell to them ! and to Him, with whom we and they alike live ; from whose presence no pathless sea, no Alpine height, no gulph of death, can e'er divide ; who spares us for his work, or calls us to his rest ; who makes sweet the memory of dreadful hours, and turns our tremblings into joy ;—to Him, the assuager of care, the reviver of hope, the giver of opportunity, I render for this hour a glad thanksgiving, and renew my vow to bear again his glorious yoke.

My purpose this morning is very simple. I ask you only to think what you have done in raising this building, and to find for your own act its true ground of thought. That you have *built this house at all*, places you at once in the great commonwealth of Christendom, and detaches you from all faiths or *unfaiths* that would destroy it. That you have *joined together* to build it, proclaims that through your religion there runs a *common consciousness* which blends and organises your individual wills into a higher unity, and makes a *Church*. The forms you have given to its outline, and the memorials embodied in its stones, speak everywhere the sentiments of *Worship*, and promise here, not the severity of teaching, but the mellowed tones of meditation and prayer. That you throw

open its gates on this sacred day, and ever, when a week is gone, think to come back to it again, is a confession that you *cannot* make your every day a Sabbath, and *would* not turn your Sabbath into an every day ; but would still intersect the time with holy lines, and help to prolong that ladder of heaven which climbs as yet through all Christian duration, the favourite pathway of saintly souls. These cardinal points I silently assume as fixed upon the very face of your design ; and what further may be the function of a Church, and ought to be the function of *this* Church, in the present age of the world, I would explain from the words of the parable,

Matthew xxv. 4.

“ The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”

And then, presuming on their supplies, they took their ease, like the foolish, and while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. So must it *not* be in that great watch-night,—that solemn eve of an eternal day,—which we call *Human Life*. The spirit that sits sentinel through its hours, intent for the Master’s voice and expectant of his approach, cannot, however rich her stores, set the lamp of duty idly on the ground, while she dreams away beneath the stars ; and then hope, by a sudden start, at the last knock, to refit the neglected fires and join the pomp and mingle with the everlasting train. The watch-lights which we must burn before God are no outward thing, no ritual adornment, but, like the glow-worm’s, the intensest kindling of our own life, rising and sinking with the tone of our energies ; and the oil that feeds them is too ethereal to be set by ; it exists only by being ever used and ever re-distilled. To keep the heart awake,—to resist all collapse of the

will and the affections,—to bring the angels of our nature to a mood not merely less heedless than the foolish virgins, but more faithful than the wise; this is the disciple's great thought, ever ringing like a midnight bell upon his ear, from the Master's awful word, "*Watch!*" A Church is a fraternity for accomplishing this thought; an association for realising the Christian life, creating the Christian mind, and guarding from deterioration the pure type of Christian perfection; and its agency is designed for keeping to their vigils the several Graces of the soul commissioned to wait upon their Lord; for trimming the lamps they severally bear, and screening them from the winds and damps of this world's night. Let us number these Graces as they stand. Till their lamps were lighted they were themselves invisible, dark negations on the grand summit of human nature, looking into the dark: but since the glory of Christ has caught them, they shine afar, and we see in their forms the distinctive spirits of our religion. First, I discern the Spirit of

ENDEAVOUR.—Foremost among the elements of the Christian consciousness do I place this,—that we must strive and wrestle to achieve the Will of God, and that only he who faints can fail. What else means the deep doctrine of self-denial, which it has ever been the lowest impertinence of philosophy to doubt, and the last degradation of human nature to reject? How else can we read the contempt we feel for those who evade martyrdom with a lie,—the throbbing of our hearts as we watch the tempted in the crisis of his trial,—and their leap of exultation when he decides, "*Better perish than be false*"? These sentiments, than which none are more ineradicable in man, and none more intensely stamped into Christian history, would be absurd illusions, if we were not en-

dowed with a knowledge, placed under a law, and invested with a power, of right and wrong : they are founded on the conception of life as an *Obedience* due, and of mere Self-will as an insurrection against authority infinitely venerable. This faith which assigns a *moral* basis to all religion, touches, I believe, the ultimate point of all certainty : older than this or newer, more authentic, more infallible, no revelation can ever be. Its very contrarieties, which offend the one-sidedness of logicians and enthusiasts, constitute its truth, and accurately represent man's balanced position ; whom you can neither turn into the mere realm of nature nor invest with the dignity of a God ; who is at once bound, yet free to slip his bonds, and strangely finds in his thralldom a true liberty, in escape a wretched slavery ; and is conscious of divine and infinite prerogatives immersed and struggling in finite conditions. All religion is Christian in proportion as it takes up into its very substance this law of conscience, and resolves itself a consecration of Duty. It is the great glory of the Catholic religion, that it adopts and proclaims this principle : to this one deep root, which penetrates through the soil and very structure of our human world, far beyond the reach of ecclesiastic storms, does it owe the width of its branches and the richness of its shade. Conscience, indeed, in reference to the universe of *Persons*, like Reason in relation to the universe of *Things*, is the *Catholic faculty* of human nature ; and no faith which does not interpret and sanctify it can take as its motto, "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*" I am not forgetful of St. Paul's depreciation of *legal* religion, and of the triumphs, asserted in all the churches of the reformation, of a Gospel of Love over a System of Law. This also I embrace with all my soul,

and chime in with the hymn of Grace led by Luther's mighty voice. But this truth is only the other's second half, and without it could no more exist than the complement without the primal arc, or the joy of convalescence without the lassitude of illness. Did not Conscience *propose* the awful problem, and the Will struggle into its midst, Faith and Affection could never bring the relief of solution. Law and Love are but the strophe and antistrophe of the great chorus of redemption; and without both the opening and the answering voices, the thought and melody must alike be broken. The moral law of God then, and the moral freedom of man, constituting life a theatre of endeavour, we lay as the granite pillars of an everlasting faith,—the Rock on which we build our Church; and whoever, in the partial spirit of one age, builds on any more inflammable material,—on the wood, hay, stubble, of a disenthralled enthusiasm,—shall find, when his work is tried by fire, that, however poised for awhile on the upward pressure of elastic heats, it will lean and totter as the temperature declines, and either drop on to some more primitive foundation, or collapse among the ruins of the past.

Is Christianity, then, a mere Ethical System? and do we identify religion and morality? Shall we say that the man who commits no fraud, or violence, or excess, is forthwith a denizen of the Kingdom of Heaven? God forbid! as soon might we say that every scribbler who makes no slip in scanning his metres and tuning his rhymes is a great Poet. Morality speaks like the defiance of the hero to his foe,—“Depart;” Religion like the summons of the leader to his impatient host,—“Arise, come on!” As a prison-task to an Olympic race, so is the duty copied from a code to the service inspired by a

faith. So long as moral restraints and obligations are urged upon us we hardly know how, by usage, by opinion, by taste, by good sense and regard to consequences, they appear to lie within a very moderate and definable compass, and to be matters of dry necessity included in the conditions of respectability. But when the voice of Christ has opened our spirit to their true nature, and from utterances of human police they become tones, stealing through the foliage of the soul, from enshadowed oracles of God, their whole character and proportion are as much changed as if the dull guest had turned into an angel, and the stifling tent expanded to the midnight skies. From the drowsy figure emerges the sleepless immortal; upon the heavy body grow the glorious wings; and the sheet which seemed a tiresome limit to our head, passes into the deep of stars open for an everlasting flight. The feeling of duty, no longer negative, ceases to act like an external hindrance and prohibition, and becomes a positive internal power of endless aspiration. Yes, of *endless* aspiration; for if the suggestions of conscience are breathings from the Holiest, they are no finite whole, but parts of an infinite Thought, the surface movements of a boundless deep. When we have brought ourselves to be at one with them, when they are no longer dashed and broken by the resistance of our spirits, but carry harmoniously with them all the movements of our nature, still all is not over; God will now try us with a quicker time: wave after wave of impulse will roll in with intenser speed from the tides of his eternal Will; till the undulations reach the limits of a new element, and our thrilling spirits burst into an immortal light. To whomsoever God is Holy, to him is Duty Infinite. The good habits, in which others abide content, give him no rest;

they are but half his world, and *that* not the illumined half : by the rotatory law of all custom, they have gone off into the dark, and make now but the negative hemisphere of his obligations ; and this must be completed by another, where the morning light of thought is fresh, and the genial warmth of love yet glows. To such a mind is revealed the depth of that word, “ There is none good save One ; ” and of that other, “ I must work the work of Him that sent me, while it is day ; ” and life appears simply as the appointed scene of *holy Endeavour*.

Now, to awaken this consciousness of infinite obligation, to draw forth and interpret its solemn intimations ; to resist and expose, as a Satanic delusion, every sluggish doubt or mean doctrine which denies it,—and to sustain it in its noblest resolves,—is the first function of a Christian Church. The great antagonist to it is that corruption of ease, that poisonous notion of enjoyment as the end of life, which in so many men absolutely stifles the higher soul, and suppresses in them the belief in its existence. In that lowest condition of human nature, man enjoys a certain unity with himself, because all powers above his animal and intellectual being are fast asleep, and give him no contradiction in his unworthy career. In its highest condition, his nature reaches again a unity with itself, because faith and conscience have carried their demands, and rule without dispute whatever is below. It is the aim of the Church to urge him through the vast interval between these two limits ; during the whole of which he is at *variance with himself*, and cries out for deliverance from that “ body of death,” which at first made up his entire consciousness and is no other than his unawakened self. When that fatal sleep is once broken, it is the business of a Church to suggest,

perhaps even to provide, a discipline of voluntary self-denial, without which the incipient insight will not last, but relapse into the darkness which it is so difficult to dispel from the infinite. It is wonderful how faithful endeavour withdraws the curtain from before the opening eye of the late slumbering soul. As one who just turns on his pillow,—with another folding of the hands to sleep,—*feels without recognising* the dazzling light, and it only passes through into his dreams to paint anew their empty phantasies;—so the mind, just stirring from the dead repose of self, does not yet treat as *real* the dawning glow of a diviner consciousness; which, stopping there, will only glide as a bewildering spectrum over the scenery which the man takes to be the world. But let him spring up and break the bands of sleep; let him move about among the objects which the new light shows, and *do* the things which it requires; and anon he finds what's true, and feels how he is transferred from the subterranean den of dreams into the open and lustrous universe. Effort is the condition of the commonest intellectual knowledge; much more, of insight into things moral and divine. Is there a poem or a landscape which you are anxious to remember? So long as you only *look at it and take it in*, though with attention ever so fixed, its hold upon you will be slight and transient: but invert the mental order, begin at the active instead of the passive end, and force yourself *to reproduce it* by pencil or by word; and it becomes a part of yourself, incorporated with the very fabric of your mind. So with the whispers of the holiest spirit; while they only pass across the still—though it be *listening*—ear of the soul, they are evanescent as the traceless wind; but *act* on them, and you will believe in them; produce their issue,

and you shall know their source ; and he with whom God's presence has quieted a passion or subdued a grief is surprised by the nearness of his reality. Such *Endeavour*, such earnestness of life, do the members of a Church undertake to preserve in one another's remembrance.

But next to this high Angel of the Soul, I observe a downcast spirit, bearing in her hand the lamp of HUMILIATION : and she too must never cease from her sorrowing watch.

Endeavour has its seat in the Will. If there were no sense of *difficulty* in the exercise of Will, if all resistance crumbled away at the first touch of purpose, and thought could fly off into instant execution, failure, shame, remorse would be unknown ; conscience would realise whatever it conceived ; and though the *infinite character* of holy obligation would leave an ineffaceable interval between our position and our aspirations, the one would for ever tend to overtake the other ; and the chase, albeit without a goal, would be inspired by the joy of an eternal success. No deeper shade than the mild sense of imperfection would fall upon the spirit. But our actual condition is very different. The suggestions of God are ever fresh and his enterprises always new, demanding, if not new matter, at least a new spirit : and it is *hard* to our Will to quit the old track, to snap the old restraints, to lash itself into a higher speed. And thus, with a sentient nature that loves the *easiest*, and a conscience that reveres the *best*, we feel that Epicurus and Christ meet face to face within our soul ; which becomes at once the theatre, the stake, the arbiter, of the most solemn of all conflicts. The pleasant pleadings, so persuasive to our languid strength, make our Temptation ;

and their triumph plunges us into the *Sense of Guilt*. This utterly changes the relations of the mind to God ; breaks the springs of Endeavour ; turns every blessed sanctity from a life *within* the heart to a load upon it ; and condenses the infinite heaven of duty into a leaden universe of nightmare on the breast. So sinks in sadness the pure enthusiasm that had flung itself upon the godlike track ; and the wing that had soared so high hangs drooping and broken down. It is less the *anguish* of this fallen state, than its *weakness*, that makes it awful. Who shall remove this burden of sin, which paralyses the soul's native strength and restrains it in terror from seeking God's ? Could the immediate remorse be banished or outlived, yet who can resume an infinite race with a lowered hope, or faith abashed ? This crisis is the turning point of many a life. By either fall or rise may the mind escape from it ; in the one case relapsing by the gravitation of the world into the stupor of indifference and the old belief in the dreams of sense : in the other, lifted once more into a light of heaven, milder perhaps, but less precarious. *Lifted*,—I say ; for sure it is that the fallen, though he may hold his place and fall no more, has crippled his power to lift himself. Even an archangel's wing cannot rise without an atmosphere ; and the human will (in things divine) is ineffectual with its mightiest strokes, unless surrounded by a certain air of pure and clear affection,—which recent sin exhausts and spoils. While the sweet element of love and hope and self-reverence is lost to the mind, the spasms of resolution are but pitiable distortions,—cramps of uneasiness and fear, not the progressive action of a vigorous health. It is the awful punishment of all unfaithfulness, that it turns the mind in upon itself ; makes it look at its dis-

ease, and put forth a writhing movement to escape it, with no effect but to renew the anguish, to feel all the weakness, and sink down again in faintness and despair. The intense power which conscious evil gives to considerations of *Interest*, the tumult of anxiety and alarm it induces, is in itself the most fatal obstacle to recovery : on which however, with the delusion common to all empirics, the mere moralist rests all his hopes. There are no terms in God's universe on which the selfish can be saved ; no,—not if a thousand Calvaries were to repeat to him the divine tragedy of the world. And the more you set upon him with lists of unanswerable reasons, the more do you make him the sharp-witted alien from God. What opening then is there for the offender prostrate under the sense of sin ? Shall I be told that expiation must be made by *another*, who will bear the burden for him ? Doubtless, with the low mood to which guilt has brought him, he is just in the state to accept that mercantile view of sin, and reckon it as a debt against him on the ledger of the universe, which the overflowing wealth of some perfect nature might gratuitously wipe off. And if you can then convince him that such free sacrifice *has* actually been made, that for *him* in his degradation a heavenly nature has been moved with pity, taken up the conditions of sorrow, laid down the immortal prerogative and died ; I do not deny that you may touch the springs of wonder and delight, and that a burst of thankfulness may break his ice-bound spirit and set it free. Gratitude for an immense personal benefit is the first affection of which a low and selfish mind is susceptible ; its very selfishness rendering an act of generosity in another the more surprising. The passionate emotion thus awakened may certainly tear him

from his prison ; and as the object to which your fiction conducts him is the Jesus Christ of sacred history, that sublime and holy being, the gentle and winning type of God's own perfectness, it will be strange if the false and immoral grounds of his first homage are not insensibly exchanged for a veneration purer and more disinterested. As it is sometimes easiest at the moment to cure a morbid patient by a trick, the immediate case of many souls may be met by this disenchanting legerdemain ; but not without the cost inseparable from *untruth*. The great doctrine of *mediation* is here corrupted by a complete inversion of its truth. There are two parts of our nature essential to our first approaches to God ; the *Imagination* places him before us as an object of conception external to the mind ; the *Conscience* interprets his personal relations of communion with ourselves. The first of these emphatically needs a mediator ; the function of the second perishes, the moment he appears. *We cannot trust* the representative faculty of our nature whose pencil of design varies with the scope of Reason, and whose colours change with the moods and lights of Passion, to go direct to the sheet of heaven, and show us the Almighty there : else, what watery ghost, or what glaring image, might we not have of the Eternal Providence ? Only through what *has been* upon earth can we safely look to *what is* in heaven ; through historical to divine perfection ; and by keeping the eye intently fixed on the highest and most majestic forms in which living minds have ever actually revealed their thoughts and ways, we have a steady type, with hues that do not change or fly, of the great source of souls. Jesus of Nazareth, the centre of the scattered moral possibilities of history, is thus mediator to our imagination between God and man. On the

other hand, *we cannot allow* the Conscience to resign for an instant its native right of immediate contact and audience with God: to delegate the privilege is treason; and to quit his eye is death. Yet the current theology reverses this. The imagination of the offender, at the very instant that it is throwing out the fire and smoke of conscious guilt, is invited to paint its own unmediated image of the Most High, and rely upon the terrible picture with unquestioning faith; and while the corrupted fancy is thus sustained in its audacity, the shuddering Conscience is encouraged in its cowardice, and allowed to hand over its burthen to a mediator, under pretence of forfeited approach. Who says, that the sinner must fly the terror of the Lord? I say, he must *face* the terror of the Lord, and instead of blasting it will only melt him then. You say, he *dares* not tell his tale and cannot pray? Then, I answer, not yet is he true and contrite; and it is not his humility, but the little speck of insincerity still spoiling it, that asks for a mediator. He must accept his whole abasement; must desire, not to *escape*, but to *endure*, his woe; must not even hang the head and veil the face before God; but look full up into the eye of infinite Purity, and, as he disburthens himself, seek its most piercing glance, that nothing may escape. Nothing but truth can appear before God; but the truth always *can* appear, and loses its very nature in parting with its rights to an intercessor. And, as dreaded duties are apt in the performance to surprise us by their lightness, so the moment the soul lies thus exposed and transparent before God, he appears terrible no more: the dark reserve thrown from the heart seems to sweep away the cloud from him; and he shines upon us, not indeed with the sudden blaze of clearance after storm,

but with the affectionateness of an eternal constancy. We have trusted him, and he is distant no more; we are emancipated into sympathy with his pure nature; the old aspirations find way again; and instead of looking at him with outside recoil, we go up into his glory, losing ourselves once more in those positive admirations and desires for perfection, which are the very glow of his spirit, and which, far more than any passionate gratitude for personal benefits, are fitted to restore our union with him. And in this crisis it is that the repentant eye, now purified by tears, turns with infinite refreshment from the false forms that have beguiled it, to rest on Christ, as the divine depository of the sanctity we have lost and seek again; and that the ear feels the deep sweetness of that call, "Come unto me, ye weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Now to give this humiliating self-knowledge, to open the sources of remorse, to prevent its lingering into morbid and credulous woe, to cause every film of pride and fear to drop away, and bring the penitent to make a clear heart before God, is the proper aim and function of a Church; which thus humanises, while it sanctifies, and uses our own sins as ground for pity to others, not others' as excuses for our own. In the early Christian societies, penitents were recognised and distinguished as a class,—a practice which, however needed in evil times as a check to apostacy, could have no place now, without drawing lines of classification not truly distinguishing the characters of men. In later times, the still more dangerous practice of confession to a human—yet hardly human, because a sacerdotal—ear, bears witness to the boundless power of repentance in the heart of Christendom. Perhaps the reaction into the jealous individuality

of modern times, in which each soul not only repels the intrusion, but declines the sympathy of another, has been carried beyond the point of natural equilibrium. At least it is *not natural* that, in fraternities under common vows of Christian obligation, flourishing selfishness should often hold a higher place than humble sanctity ; and *un-repaired*, therefore *impenitent*, injustice should lift its head unabashed amid indulgent worshippers. Surely the power of rebuke is too much lost in an easy indifference ; the estimates of the world,—ranging greatly by outward fortune and condition,—have extravagantly encroached on those of the Church, which can look only to internal soundness and affluence of soul. *That* is not a true community of disciples, in which a collective Christian opinion does not make itself felt by at least some silent and significant expression. So long as the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for the battle ? By its revelations of self-knowledge, its echo to the voice of self-reproach ; by its suggestion of a restorative discipline ; by its appeal to that faith in infinite possibilities which alone sustains the burthen of penitential self-denial ; by leading the soul at once to suffer, to aspire, and to love much,—must every Church of Christ pour into the energy of *endeavour*, the lowly spirit of *humiliation*.

Side by side with this sad Angel of the Soul stands another, with look of equal meekness, only clear of shame : and the small fair light in her hand, shining a few steps into the dark around, is the lamp of

TRUST.—The companion Spirits of which we have hitherto spoken preside over the work and temper of the *Conscience* in its relation to God ; and they would still have to stand upon their watch, though the soul

(were such a thing possible) lived in empty space, in mere private audience with its Creator. But now comes before it *another* object, forcing it to look a different way, and pressing for some orderly interpretation;—viz., *Nature* or the outward Universe. To a mind that, through moral experience, has *already begun its life with God*, the glorious spectacle of the heavens and the earth will instantly appear divine: the voice of the waters and the winds, the procession of the sun and stars, the mountain's everlasting slopes, smiling upwards with pastures till they frown in storms,—will seem the expressions of Eternal Thought. Well would it be if this first absorption of nature into the substance of faith enabled them permanently to grow harmoniously together. But the universe, which ought to be the abode, becomes to us the rival, of the living and indwelling God. Its inflexible steadiness, its relentless march, so often crushing beneath the wheels of a blind law the fairest flowers of beauty and the unripened fruits of patient hope, look so unlike the free movements of a living and loving mind, that the decrees impressed on finite matter begin to contest the sway of the Infinite Spirit. Other sorrows than any mentioned yet,—sorrows *not merited* or self-incurred,—and which even fancy cannot plausibly link with any sin, come upon us; and as we cannot sincerely meet them with *humiliation*, we need some other guide from infidel despair. The order of Cause and Effect crosses and conflicts with the order of Moral Law. This is plainly seen in the history of the physical sciences; whose exclusive pursuit first lowers the conception of God to that of the primal force, or at best the scientific director of creation; and then lapses, consistently enough, into a fatalistic atheism. And the same thing is keenly felt in that in-

explicable distribution of suffering in human life, which, in every age, has perplexed the faith and saddened the love, of hearts not alien to God. How must this controversy be ended in our souls, between the *physical* God omnipotent in nature, and the *holy* God who reveals himself in Conscience? I will not say here what may be the solution which the thoughtful may draw from a devout Philosophy; only that it must be one which charges no evil upon God. Whatever cannot be glorified into good, let it be referred, so far as it is not from the human will, to that negative datum, that shapeless assemblage of conditions, which constitute the *ground* of the Creator's work; but it must be withheld *on any terms* from him who is the perfectly and only Good. He must be ever worshipped, not as the source, but as the antagonist, of ill; the august and ever-living check to its desolating power, who never rides upon the whirlwind, but that he may curb the storm. It is only in this view that He can have pity on our sorrows; for who could *pity* the sufferings which he himself, without the least necessity, invents and executes? That cry on Calvary, "My God, my God, why hast thou *forsaken* me?"—was it not a cry for *rescue*,—rescue as from a *foreign* foe, from a power *undivine*? And did it not then burst from One who felt the anguish of that hour as the inrush of a tide from which the barrier of God's volition had withdrawn? And so the faith which *gave way* in that momentary cry is just the opposite of this; a faith that no evil is let loose without his will; that he knows the utmost it can do, keeps it ever in his eye, and will yield to it no portion of his holy and affectionate designs; that he has *considered all our case*, and will not fail to bring it out clear, if we are true to him. *Trust* has no other bearable meaning than this; for

else it would only say that God, being the unquestionable cause of evil, is not malicious in producing it, and would thus merely silence a doubt impossible in a Christian, and scarcely pardonable in the grossest heathenism. *Trust* therefore in the ascendancy of divine Thought and Affection in the universe, serene confidence in their perfect victory, I take to be the essence of the Christian faith respecting nature. The *particular* thought of God that may be hid amid events, moulding their forms and preparing their tissues for some growth of incomparable beauty, it may be impossible to trace ; but He is there and never leaves his everlasting work ; which is the same in the shrine of conscience, in the mind of Christ, and through the sphere of universal nature.

Now to interpret life and all visible things in the spirit of this Trust ; to raise the mind oppressed by the sense of material necessity : to meet the tendencies towards passiveness and despair, and, for the consolation of memory and the kindling of hope, show where the order, not of a hard mechanism, but of beauty, love and goodness is everywhere enthroned ;—this also is the duty of a Church. In this relation we must contradict the doctrine of mere science, which proclaims *Force*, rather than *Thought*, as the source of all : we must counteract its purely causal and fatalistic explanations ; must detain in the living present, that God whom it would allow to recede indefinitely into the Past, and must lean upon Him as the nearest to us in our weakness, the most loving in our sadness, and the Rock beneath our feet in our alarms. We agree together to sustain each other in this sacred trust ; to withstand the godless doubts and grievings suggested by our lower mind ; to defy nature's inexorable Laws to disguise for us the supernatural light and love

within ; and to feel the hardest matter of life, as well as the severest work of conscience, burning at heart with his dear spirit.

This triple group, however, of Endeavour, Humiliation, and Trust, are never found apart from a sister Spirit, in whose features you trace more human lineaments, and in whose hand is borne the lamp of

SERVICE.—An individual mind, alone in the universe with God, might hold the latent germs of all that is human, and yet, in that solitude, could hardly enter, perhaps, on the real experience of endeavour, humiliation, or trust. It is only amid *other* minds, in the reflection of eye upon eye and soul upon soul, that we so read our impulses, and decipher our inspirations, as to be really capable of the religious life. Society, which opens the sphere of mutual sympathy, touches also the springs of reverence and worship. And I entreat you to notice *how* it is that the companionship of our fellows operates to bring out these individual affections. We hear much in this connexion about the *natural equality* of souls, implied in their common source and common work and common end, and are referred to this evident brotherhood as the true basis of both fraternal love to one another and filial acknowledgment of God. And, no doubt, this identity of spiritual nature *is* indispensable to all sympathy and all devotion ;—not, however, as their positive and exciting cause, but only as their *negative condition*. Like only can comprehend like : and if the being next me had *not* the same nature and the same experiences with myself, I should have no key by which to read him ; he would belong to an unintelligible type ; and fellow-feeling could have no place. But the likeness here required is not in the minds as they *are*,

only as they *might be*. Their circles of *possibility* must coalesce; the same capacities must sleep within them, and the same Law must rule over them. This similitude of *kind*, the silent assumption of which lies in all our affections, merely expresses an ultimate and unrealized *tendency*, to which present and actual facts will continually approximate. Meanwhile, these facts present a very different picture;—not of *resemblance* between man and man, but of variety so vast and contrast so startling, as almost to perplex our faith in the unity of nature. Now it is precisely this *inequality of souls* which is the *positive awakener* of all our higher affections. No man could love or venerate in a universe stocked with mere repetitions of himself; the endless portrait would be a barren weariness. He pities what is below him in happiness: he reveres what is above him in excellence: he loves what is different from him in beauty. His affections rest on those whom he blesses and those who bless him,—on his clients and his God. At the shock of lower lives and the startling spectacle of higher, he is driven to moral recoil and drawn to moral aspiration; in the one case invested with armour for the resistance of evil, in the other equipped with wings to soar after the good. Whatever is purer and nobler in another than in ourselves opens to us a new possibility, and wields over us a new authority; and thus it is that, ascending through the gradations of souls which culminate in Christ, we find ourselves carried thence at a bound over the chasm between finite and infinite, and present at the feet of the Most High, saying, “Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints; who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for Thou only art holy!”

It is therefore precisely through the diversity of minds

that the unity of the Divine law reveals and asserts itself within us ; and the common end of life to all is felt. And it is on this same inequality of souls that Christianity, as a religion of love and mutual aid, builds all its work. On the one hand, the strong must bend to the weak ; and on the other, the weak look up to the strong. In both cases there is self-denial,—self-renunciation from pity, in the former,—from obedience, in the other. In both there is reverence for what is divine ; with the one, for a god-like capacity in the low ; with the other, for a godlike reality in the lofty. When the differing ranks of minds read off their relations in these opposite directions, the whole compass of Christian service is given. Within the Church therefore the eye must be trained to discern this rank, the affections to own it, the will to obey it. Disguised under a like exterior of life are souls divided by immeasurable intervals ; and it is strange and even terrible to think what secret differences lurk beneath the common gloss and gaiety of the same assembled numbers. How superficial is the kindred of the utterly earthly, who sees no *reality* but in the means of ease, the course of material interests, and the colours thrown up by the shifting game of external life ; with the saintly sufferer, before whom these flit as unsubstantial shadows, and nothing is real but the spirit-drama that is enacting in the midst and the great Will that plays the everlasting part. Yet we often move about where both of them are found, and speak with them face to face, and believe them much alike. Can we not catch from our Lord, who looked with divine perception straight into the heart of the widow and the Samaritan, some portion of that insight which detects the heroes and despises the impostors of the present ? Why should we leave it to history to

find out and glorify the good? If they are with us, they are the most precious of all God's gifts; let us know them ere they die, and feel that the earth is sacred where they tread. Above all, in every Church, the only classification known should be of character and age: and in using these as grounds of mutual service, provision should be made for teaching the child, for lifting the suffering, for confirming the weak, and for supplying duties proportioned to the strength of the strong.

And while this angel of Service stands to her watch, a glorious Spirit is at her side and closes the train; with an undying flame from her lamp of

COMMUNION.—The relations of service are far from being limited to the present and its intercourses. Our life is but the focus of living light into which the Past and the Future condense their interests. The ranks of minds by which we help each other, run up both the directions of time, and cover the two worlds of mortals and immortals. We are ourselves disciples of an ancient and a foreign prophet; and as we pronounce the word "Christian," we feel the spark of his transmitted inspiration uniting us with a long chain of generations, and fusing Christendom into one life and one Church. We are disciples also of an *ascended* prophet; nor is it possible for any one to bow down in soul before the divine law of which he has made us conscious, to burn with the aspirations which it kindles, and touch upon the peace of entire surrender, without feeling assured that he is created on the *scale of immortality*, and that the risen Christ is indeed, as the Scripture saith, the head of an immortal host. It is a faith which fails chiefly to those, who, in looking at human life, miss its grandest elements, and are little familiar with the highest and characteristic

features of our nature. Ask the confidants of great souls,—the bosom-friends of the holy,—and they will tell you that life eternal is the only lot at all natural to the children of the Highest. And the more you grow faithful to your own most solemn experience, and learn to trust your noblest love, the more will that amazing prospect assume proportion to the terms of your daily thought. The happy instinct of purified affections is ever one of hope and ready faith. And when I simply remember what faculties, what conceptions, what insight, are implied in a being to whom a *Church* is possible at all ; when I think what a scene in the universe must be opened to a mind ere it can *pray* ; when I reflect how the Infinite God must estimate one whom He thinks it worth while to put on trial amid the theatre of free souls ;—all sense of difficulty recedes from the Christian doctrine of an hereafter ; all rules drawn from other races of creatures sink absolutely away ; and man appears no less ennobled above them than if, like the Angel of the “Revelations,” he were standing in the sun. Under the influence of this truth, the natural kindred of souls is infinitely extended and deepened ; exalted into independence of change ; and glorified by the hope of sympathy and connexions ever fresh. The blessed family of God colonises, not only the banks of the time-stream that passes by, but the Alpine heights from which it flows, and the blessed isles of the ocean to which it tends.

This sense of Communion between all ages and both worlds, it is the business of a Church to cherish. Within its walls, and by its ways, must the mind be surrounded by the atmosphere in which this faith may thrive and grow,—this family tradition of noble souls be guarded and handed down. For this end, neither the mediation

of argument nor the directness of authority will avail so much as the just and holy discipline of the conscience and affections. To nurture the love of greatness and goodness in the past ; to awaken confidence in the intuitive estimates of the pure and pious heart ; to glorify the dark places of the world with some light of thought and love ; to vindicate the sanctity of death against the pretensions of its physical features, and penetrate its awful spaces with the glow of prayer and hope ;—is the true method of clearing away the mists from holy expectation, and realising the communion of Saints.

See then in complete array, the five *wise* Spirits of the soul that must stand through the night of the Bridegroom's tarrying, with their ever-constant lights of Endeavour, Humiliation, Trust, Service, and Communion. To maintain them at their vigils is the proper end of every Church that would maintain the Christian attitude of life. Am I asked, by some theologic wanderer, what then is special to *this* Church? I say, chiefly this, that these five lamps, and these alone, we believe to be held in angel hands, and fed with the eternal aliment of truth ; nor will they ever give of their oil to nurture the emptied lamps, which many foolish servitors of the bridegroom have brought, and which now are flickering with their last flame, and expiring in the smoke of error. A pretty late hour in the watches of this world has struck : many of the interests and controversies that once dazzled with their flame have been self-consumed : and when, to find how the night rolls, we look up to heaven and observe the altered place and half-inverted form of the eternal constellations, we know that a morning hour is drawing on. It behoves every Christian Church to be awake and set itself in order for a coming age, in which, as I be-

lieve, the strife will be something very different from that whence existing churches obtain their several names. It is not without some view to that Future of the Church that I have called the five Spirits, *spirits of the soul*, and have shown them to you as they rise from our nature itself. I might with equal truth have called them *characteristics of Christianity*, and have evoked them by appeal to Scripture, and the analysis of Christian history. But we are on the verge of a time, when the mere use of an external authority, however just and moderate its application, will cease to be of much hearty avail ; and only *those* elements either of Scripture or of Christian history will have any chance of reverent preservation, which find interpretation and response in the deeper experience of Man. Whoever keeps fearlessly true to these may feel secure ; but none can say what else will survive the perils of the present and the coming time. What mean the strange movements of Catholicism on the one side, and a pantheistic Socialism on the other, between which every form of mere Protestantism is growing weaker, day by day ? Are they not a reaction against the extreme individuality, the disintegrating tendency, of modern Christianity ; whose unions, born in the transient enthusiasm of reformation, cannot maintain themselves against the habits of freedom they have created, or live upon the dogmas they refuse to change ? Are they not both an attempt, only prosecuted in opposite directions, to recover some centre of human cohesion, more powerful than interest or judgment, around which the scattered sympathies and dissipated energies of society may be collected ? In this common quest, the one reproduces an authority dear to the Memory of Christendom, the other pours out prophecies dazzling to the Hopes of all

men ; the one adorns the *old* earth, the other paints a *new*. The field seems clearing fast to make room for these great rivals ; and in their mutual position the signs are not few, that they portend a mightier contest than Europe has seen for many an age. The hosts are already visibly mustering. On the one hand the venerable Genius of a *Divine Past* goes round with cowl and crozier ; and from the Halls of Oxford and the Cathedrals of Europe gathers, by the aspect of ancient sanctity and the music of a sweet eloquence and the praises of consecrated Art, a vast multitude of devoted crusaders to fight with him for the ashes of the Fathers and the sepulchres of the first centuries. On the other, the young Genius of a *Godless Future*, with the serene intensity of metaphysic enthusiasm on his brow, and the burning songs of liberty upon his lips, wanders through the great cities of our world, and in toiling workshops and restless colleges preaches the promise of a golden age, when priests and kings shall be hurled from their oppressive seat, and freed humanity, relieved from the incubus of worship, shall start itself to the proportions of a God. Who shall abide in peace the crash and conflict of this war ? He only, I believe, whose allegiance is neither to the antiquated Past, nor to the speculative Future ; but to the imperishable, the ever-present Soul of man as it is ; who keeps close, amid every change, to the reality of human nature which changes not ; and who, following chiefly the revelations of the Divine will to the open and conscious mind, and reading Scripture, history, and life, by their interpreting light, feels the serenity and rests on the stability of God.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE
FIRST-BORN.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN

HOPE-STREET NEW CHURCH,
LIVERPOOL,

ON

SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 21, 1849.

By CHARLES WICKSTEED, B.A.,

MINISTER OF MILL-HILL CHAPEL, LEEDS.

A S E R M O N.

Hebrews xii. 22-24.

“ But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

OF all the desires of the present time, there is no one more profound and general than the desire for Christian unity, communion, and fellowship. Indeed, the craving for agreement, for, as it were, spiritual identity, for the support *in* conviction, and the comfort *from* conviction, that according numbers seem to impart, has characterised the history of Christianity through its whole extent. On this has been founded the determination of the Roman Catholic Church, to preserve at all costs, at costs often most painful to itself, its spiritual and formal unity : and in this have originated the imitative efforts of the various protesting churches which have sprung from it.

But taught by the experience of ages, taught by the resolute and the ever-recurring intellectual differences of mankind, the unity at which, for the most part, the present age is aiming, is a unity of feeling, a fellowship of labour, a communion of love. The old desire for unity took the form of Proselytism. Each Church supposing itself to be constructed especially and exclusively after the heavenly type, it could realise no other and no better unity than the conversion of all mankind to its standards, and the introduction of the whole race within the veil of its Temple. Much of this aim and expectation is to be met with still. The Roman Catholic Priest goes about, hoping to bring his Protestant neighbours back into the true faith, and rejoicing in the prospect which he thinks begins to dawn, that unity may be yet achieved in England, by the return of the Church and the nation into spiritual submission to the Papal See. The clergyman of the English Church may still be found, ignoring the existence of Dissent in his parish, talking of the number of souls under his care, of spiritual destitution, of there being only one church or two churches, one school or two schools, in such and such a population, while there may be an equal number of other churches and other schools maintained for like holy purposes, but to whose very existence, as they are not within his spiritual precincts, he chooses to be blind.

But though these are very important phenomena, and show that the old dream of the outward comprehension of all the inhabitants of a country under the same forms and symbols, in the bosom of the same outward Church, is being dreamed among us still; yet such is not the tendency of the general and independent elements of society. The liberal churchman is beginning to regard

his Church as a religious community among religious communities, and only desires permission for it to take and keep its ground, as others are to take and keep theirs too. The Wesleyan probably never did regard his conference or association as the ultimate or general form of Christian government and fellowship, but if he ever did so he must now be taught, by the rapid course of events, to regard this view of it as untenable. The Independent earnestly struggles for his theory of Congregationalism ; but so far is that theory from tending to a comprehension within the limits of one outward Church and Formula, that it rests upon the basis of the independence of each society. Added to these signs of hopelessness of, or indifference to, universal dominion on the part of the separate bodies, is the increasing desire to unite on principles which are sufficiently wide, and for purposes which are sufficiently general, to allow each body to retain its own peculiar standing-point.

The modern desire of union and of fellowship, then, takes the form, not so much of proselytism as of comprehension ; is founded, not so much on the expectation of bringing all communions into one Church, as of bringing all Churches into one communion. It is distinguished by the effort, while seeing the points of difference, to discover the points of agreement, and, while recognising the right of intellectual and theological variety, to bring out into practical relief the reality of a moral harmony. The organisations by which it has been attempted to combine parties otherwise differing, for the expression of some common feeling or the achievement of some common object, however imperfect in their conception, or incomplete in their accomplishment, are indications of the existence of this desire. Contemplated in this light, the

Evangelical Alliance itself is not without its interest. For, whatever may be its exclusions, and whatever its narrowness, it yet at least attempts to penetrate through the mere Episcopalianism of the Churchman, the mere Congregationalism of the Independent, the mere Methodism of the Wesleyan, to a common Christianity, deeper and more vital than anything involved in these points (important as in themselves they may be), and so far even this, in many respects exclusive and limited, association bears witness to the growing desire of our times for peace combined with liberty, independence combined with concord, and the love of truth combined with the love of each other.

But besides this tendency towards a larger comprehension and wider terms of union, there is a growing dislike in most bodies, of denunciation and virulence. The firm adhesion of a man to that Church or that Body which is to him the depository of the purest forms of truth, is a subject of genuine respect. But there is less and less disposition to approve of the peculiarities of that division being made all-important, and theological intolerance has now to be combined with some striking practical excellence or moral power to be itself tolerated. The working classes of our large towns especially look upon the struggles and animosities of sects with indifference, and even with disgust, regarding that man as the best man who lives the best life, and that man as the purest Christian who most resembles his Lord.

Two things have principally contributed to this tendency: First, the growing disposition to ask what are the essentials of Christianity, and to separate from these the adjuncts or modifications which the convictions of

each body require it, in its own case, to make. According to the breadth or narrowness, the grandeur or pettiness, of our estimate of these essentials, will be the character for comprehensiveness or exclusiveness of the Church we found upon them. Thus, if to submit to the authority of a particular Church be necessary to the right reception of the Christian faith, then the essential element of unity is conformity. If the essentials of Christianity be a set of theological propositions laid down in a special ecclesiastical symbol, then there is no such thing as a Christian Church comprehending all, but only a Christian sect requiring that all shall belong to her. But if the essentials of Christianity are found out to be not in the things which distinguish Churches so much as in that which is common to all, then we may worship with a liturgy or without a liturgy, under the ceiling of a meeting-house or the roof of a church, under the ministry of clergymen ordained by Bishops, or ordained by Presbyters, or ordained by the voice of God in their own consciences, and in their people's choice ; the essentials of Christianity will be alike within the reach of us all : and there may on earth be found such a thing as free thought combined with a common heart, individual liberty with universal charity, and Christ may say unto us all, "I am the vine, ye are the branches."

The second thing which has contributed to this desire for Christian union, and a perception of its possibility, is the influence of good men ; the natural, catholicising tendency of their Christian tempers, and their holy lives. Persons who have been in the habit of supposing belief in certain doctrines essential to Christian character and Christian salvation, are *startled* from their position by the discovery that certain men, whose lives and characters

they venerate for their purity and goodness, and about whose salvation it is impossible for them to doubt, do not believe all these supposed essentials. These truly good men rise up before them in every branch of the Church ; live long, holy, and beneficent lives ; manifest the fruits of sincere truth-loving and heavenly hearts ; and they cannot possibly conceive of such men being driven from the presence of their God, and living in the eternal sorrows of his displeasure.

In asking, then, who are the true Church below, we find a very good guidance in the light reflected from this other question, who are the true Church above ? In inquiring whom we should consider our brethren and fellow-Christians here, our greatest help will be found in the answer of our hearts to the question, who are likely to be of the general assembly and church of the first-born hereafter ?

Thus there grows up, almost unconsciously, within every man whose heart is open to the signs of human excellence wherever discerned, a sort of Church of the Soul, very different in its filling up and in its limitations from any of the fixed ecclesiastical divisions around us, which we exclusively call Churches. And we find ourselves anticipating as it were the conditions of heaven and the judgment of God, in settling (not indeed to the satisfaction of the logician, but in obedience to the yearnings of our own hearts) what are the essentials of Christian Faith and Life on earth, and who are the children of the kingdom here.

It will be my object, then, to-night, with a single eye to the end I have in view, and without scrupling to employ any plainness of statement which I may find necessary to my purpose—to bring this test before your

good sense, your conscience, and your affections, in the most palpable form I can command.

Let us, then, vary the ordinary tenor of address, and the customary appeals of argument and demonstration, and inquire for Christianity by inquiring for our fellow-Christians, and for the essential faith of Jesus Christ by inquiring for the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, a young French ecclesiastic of extraordinary piety and virtue commenced his career of public duty with the charge of a seminary devoted to those who had been newly converted to that branch of the Christian Church of which he was himself a conscientious member. Subsequently, he went into an unhealthy and desolate district where the greatest cruelties had been practised against those whom he was now desired to convert. The first demand he made of the king was, that all armies should be removed from the district, and that all persecution and oppression should immediately cease. He then set himself to the task of recovering the wanderers by kindness and persuasion to the bosom of that Church from which they had strayed. He lived a long life, but when removed from that district, he watched over it and all others similarly circumstanced, and whenever he heard of harshness and severity sent his remonstrance to the seat of power.

From this post of duty he was removed to the most fascinating and brilliant court of Europe. He was made tutor to a boy of great ability, but almost ungovernable pride and passion, but of whom it was important to the world that he should create an accomplished man and a virtuous Christian, for he was heir to one of the greatest monarchies of the earth. Here, amidst his pupil's bursts

of passion, he maintained an unbending dignity, and the proud boy soon learned to weep before him for his sins, to drink in his instructions with eagerness, to delight in him and to love him. Here royalty, too, received his calm but intrepid rebuke, and power acknowledged his sincere independence.

He was raised, but by no arts or efforts of his own, to an archbishopric. Here the still piety, which was part of his nature, was misapprehended. His principles and his doctrines were misinterpreted and condemned. A storm of calumny gathered round him. The smile of royalty was converted into a frown, the arm of patronage was changed into a weapon of offence—friendship turned away from him—that Church which he had so sincerely served, began to regard him as her enemy—and the revered head of it slowly and unwillingly pronounced his condemnation. In the midst of all this (gentle, susceptible, modest as was his nature), he held fast to his integrity. Immersed in a wearisome, protracted controversy, he preserved throughout his courage undaunted, and his charity unchilled. “God, who is the witness of my thoughts,” says he to one of his greatest adversaries, “knows that, though differing with you in opinion, I still continue to revere you, to preserve unceasingly my respect, and to deplore the bitterness of this contention.”

In the midst, and in the pauses of this storm, he was performing the duties of his See with exemplary fidelity. A peace-maker among the divided, a rebuker of the dissolute, an encourager of the deserving, a father to the poor: surrounded by the pomp of a principedom, he lived the life of simplicity. The humblest village pulpit in his diocese knew the sound of his voice, and the presence of

his care. He would sit down in his walks with the rustic on the grass, and utter his pure words of counsel. He would daily have his almoners around him, to minister to the necessitous; and when the evening hour set in, he was found with his household in prayer. Throughout all these labours, sorrows, and painful remembrances, his only recreation was to walk. His conversation was directed to instruction. "I have still fresh in my recollection," says one, "all the serious and important subjects which were the topics of our discourse; my ear caught with eagerness every word that issued from his lips: his letters are still before me, and they bespeak the purity of his sentiments, and the wisdom of his principles. I preserve them among my papers, as the most precious treasure which I have in the world." His sense of friendship was intense and pure. "Good friends," says he, "are a dangerous treasure in life; in losing them we lose too much. I dread the charms of friendship. Oh! how happy shall we be, if, hereafter, we are together before God, loving each other in his love, and rejoicing only in his joy, and no longer exposed to separation." At length the hour of death approached him. He lay thinking of his friends, his flock, and his Church; receiving the consolations of his faith—hearing the selected words of the Scripture, and saying, "Repeat—repeat to me those holy words again." He died as he had lived, in sanctity—all his goods given to his students, to his clergy, to his guests, to works of piety, and to the poor.

This man was a ROMAN CATHOLIC—his name was FENELON.

In our own country, and nearer our own time, at the beginning of the present century, in a county bordering on

the Principality of Wales, there resided, in a not ignoble condition of life, a true servant of God, who took under his care the spiritual and the temporal wants of an extensive but humble neighbourhood. Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, he watched with anxiety over the morals, the faith, and the happiness of those about him. Frank and cheerful in his manners and habits, he was full of an earnest piety. He thought that the strictness which made no distinction between things absolutely immoral, and things that were innocent, or blameable only in their abuse, was prejudicial to the interests of sincerity and religion. He was so absolutely simple and good-natured, from the innocence of his own heart, so little prone to consider how others might view him, when he saw and meant no evil—that people who were accustomed to judge of seriousness of character by habitual length of countenance, scarcely appreciated the religiousness of his soul, as it really lay deeply within him. From a child he was devout. When in circumstances of danger his mother was in alarm, the infant monitor beside her said, “Be still, mother ; God will protect us.”

The generous liberality which compelled his parents, when sending him to school, to sew up his money in his pocket, lest he should give it all away upon the road, tempered with the wiser judgment of the man, continued with him in maturity. When the poor came to speak to him, he always, if possible, went out to them immediately, for he said, “the time of the poor is very valuable to them ; besides, they are more sensitive to any apparent inattentions.”

In the midst of all this simplicity and goodness, he was courted by the great for his talents, and for the fascination of his company, and his connexions opened out

to him the prospect of a brilliant and distinguished career. But there was one subject which pre-eminently engaged his interests, away from the engagements immediately around him. He thought much of the superstitions, ignorance, neglect and misery in which lands at a distance lay under the reign of Heathenism. He heard of a Brahmin who had gone to die on the banks of his sacred river—but to whom a British officer had given nourishment, and whom he had thus saved. The Brahmin lost caste by this occurrence, was avoided by his own countrymen, became dependent on the British officer, and each day, as he came for his subsistence, cursed the hand that had saved his miserable life. “Now,” said he, “if I could only rescue one such miserable creature from this wretched superstition, I should think myself repaid for any sacrifice.”

The dear claims of neighbourhood, friendship, old family associations, and old familiar habits—the still dearer claims of his relationship, as father, husband, brother, son—made him pause for a moment, but at length he accepted the arduous and honourable post that was assigned him in the eastern continent. For three or four years he laboured in that fatal clime, travelling from region to region, initiating and confirming in the mild faith of the Gospel, raising the character, and stimulating the zeal, of the Christian population, elevating the condition of the natives, noticing and remonstrating against their oppression or neglect, founding schools for their instruction, and endeavouring to bring the blessings of justice in their own tongue into their own neighbourhoods, till at length he killed himself by the labours that were too great for his strength, and left a Church in India sorrowing as for a father.

That man was a BISHOP OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH—his name was REGINALD HEBER.

An upholsterer in London had an only son. Having been successful in his business he left him considerable property. With this the son greatly enlarged an originally small estate, lived among his tenantry, and devoted himself to their good. The neighbourhood being unhealthy, he drained it—the cottages being badly constructed, he rebuilt them—the people being ignorant, he opened and supported schools. He encouraged the habit of attending religious instructions, and warned all those about him from places of intemperate or dissolute resort. His health being delicate, from the commencement of manhood he had often travelled for its improvement. On one of these occasions, attracted by the mournful incident which had left Lisbon in the ruins of an earthquake, his course was directed to the shores of Portugal. He was seized, when on the waters, flung into captivity, and confined in the nauseous dungeon of a jail in France. Here, meat was flung to himself and his fellow-captives as to dogs; they had no instruments wherewith to cut it, and they gnawed it off the bone in the ravenousness of their hunger. In the midst of the horrors of this captivity, he excited a most remarkable feeling of reliance on his honour—was presently permitted to be at large upon his word—and finally was sent home on the express condition that he would return to his confinement in France, if the English government refused to liberate a French naval officer in his place. This promise he would have fulfilled, if the government of his own country had not, by their compliance with the conditions, rendered his return unnecessary.

Years rolled by, and his life was marked by the same

attributes of sobriety, virtue, religiousness and benevolence, with the addition of great efforts on behalf of captives of war, with whose fate and sufferings he could now so acutely sympathize—till he was made High Sheriff of his county. In this official capacity he was, at Assize time, to be met with in the prison, examining into the condition and government of its every part, even to its inmost cell. “The distress of prisoners,” he says, “of which there are few who have not some imperfect idea, came more immediately under any notice, when I was Sheriff of the county of Bedford; and the circumstance which excited me to activity in their behalf was, the seeing some, who by the verdict of juries were declared *not* guilty; some, in whom the grand jury did not find such an appearance of guilt as subjected them to trial; and some, whose prosecutors did not appear against them; after having been confined for months, dragged back to jail, and locked up again till they should pay sundry fees to the jailer, the clerk of assize, &c. In order to redress this hardship, I applied to the justices of the county, for a salary to the jailer in lieu of his fees. The Bench were properly affected with the grievance, and willing to grant the relief desired; but they wanted a precedent for charging the county with the expense. I therefore rode into several neighbouring counties in search of a precedent; but I soon learned that the same injustice was practised in them; and looking into the prisons, I beheld scenes of calamity, which I grew daily more and more anxious to alleviate.”

You know the rest—you know the heroic career of philanthropy which filled every town and county of Great Britain, and every country of the world, with the name of this great social benefactor. Devotedly attached to his

own views of Christian truth, in the work of Christian benevolence, to him Christian, Mussulman and Hindoo were all alike ; he would have risked his life to save any. In a remote province of Russia, stricken by a fever caught by attendance on another, lay at length the philanthropist, at the goal of all his earthly labours. In his memorandum book he had been writing, “ May I not look on present difficulties or think of future ones in this world, as I am but a pilgrim or wayfaring man that tarries but a night ; this is not my home ; but may I think what God has done for me, and rely on his power and grace.”—“ My soul, remember how often God has sent an answer of Peace, Mercies in the most seasonable times—how often better than thy fears, exceeded thy expectations. Oh ! why should I distrust this good and faithful God ? In His word, He hath said, ‘ In all my ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy path.’ But, Lord ! leave me not to my own wisdom, which is folly, nor to my own strength, which is weakness. Help me to glorify Thee on earth, and finish the work Thou givest me to do.” “ Suffer,” he said to his friends as he was dying, “ suffer no pomp to be used at my funeral, nor any monument, nor any monumental inscription whatsoever, to mark where I am laid : lay me quietly in the earth, place a sundial over my grave, and let me be forgotten.” This man was a CALVINISTIC DISSENTER—his name was HOWARD.

More than a hundred years ago a pious boy left a country parsonage, the abode of his father, and entered the Charter-house school in London. From thence he went to Christ Church College, Oxford. There he advanced, not only in the learning of the place, but in habits of Christian seriousness and piety, which were not of the place. Associating himself with a few others like-

minded with himself, they devoted a portion of their time to a study of the Scriptures and to serious reading. Always of a moral and religious disposition, he might be said to have obeyed the commandments from his youth. But this he soon began to feel was not enough. He began to visit the sick in prison and the poor in their homes; prayed and exhorted; avoided all trifling acquaintance; and commenced the religious observance of the ancient fasts of the Church, keeping Wednesdays and Fridays with a distinct religiousness. In the midst of all this he had much heaviness and fear—was often weak in his new faith, and of doubtful mind. Yet keeping his eye upon his object, he practised abstemiousness—underwent exposure to sudden changes of climate, heat and cold, fatigue and dangers, which were, under Providence, to prepare him for his work. Presently he stepped forth to awaken a drowsy, careless world, sunk in sin and sensuality. The conventionalism of society was shocked. Though a clergyman of the English Church, the door of the English Church was shut against him. But Newgate was open to him; the hill-side, and the high-way, and the market-place, were free to him; and submitting to be made thus vile, as he expressed it, against his own natural taste and liking, he preached with ardour the word of warning; and while he created great inquietude of heart in those who heard him, at the dreadful nature of sin and the just wages of it, he spake again to the storm and tempest of these souls, and immediately there was a great calm.

All these services were not rendered without great contradiction of sinners. The brutal people rose up against their benefactor; thereby showing what need they had of him. Alluding to the gradual growth of

these outrages, he says, "By how gentle degrees does God prepare us for his will! Two years ago a piece of brick grazed my shoulders. It was a year after that a stone struck me between the eyes. Last month I received one blow, and this evening two; one before we came into the town, and one after we were gone out; but both were as nothing; for though one man struck me on the breast with all his might, and the other on the mouth with such a force that the blood gushed out immediately, I felt no more pain from either of the blows than if they had touched me with a straw." At length he was surrounded with fellow-labourers in this cause, in this great and good cause of the conversion of the heathens at *home*. He made rules, he organised a society, he appointed districts, and preachers, and meetings. And he nobly says, "The thing which I was greatly afraid of all this time, and which I resolved to use every possible method of preventing, was a narrowness of spirit, a party zeal, a being straitened in our own bowels; that miserable bigotry which makes many so unready to believe that there is any work of God but among themselves. I thought it might be a help against this frequently to read to all who were willing to hear, the accounts I received from time to time of the work which God is carrying on in the earth, both in our own and other countries; not among us alone, but among those of various opinions and denominations. For this I allotted one evening in every month; and I find no cause to repent of my labour: it is generally a time of strong consolation to those who love God, and all mankind for his sake, as well as a means of breaking down the partition-wall which either the craft of the devil or the folly of men has built up, and of encouraging every child of God to say, 'Whosoever doth

the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' ”

No doubt in all this a strong will was manifested, and was accompanied by the exercise of no little authority. Considerable means poured in upon him to help him in the accomplishment of his extensive work. Selfish men were not slow to attribute to him the baseness which would have characterised themselves. But death, the great earthly judge, vindicated his character from this calumny, for he died possessed of nothing but his books.

This man, the spiritual father and regenerator of many thousand souls, was unwillingly the greatest SCHISMATIC the Church of England has ever known—his name was WESLEY.

I must touch upon two characters I wish still to call to your remembrance with much less detail. One there is, the record of whose life must have recently passed through the hands of many now present, who was worthy of being enrolled among those women who followed our Lord unto his death, and ministered to his last necessities. The gentle woman who could throw off the allurements of a life of refinement—who could submit to the distressing demands of public duty upon a shrinking nature—who could go with her spotless purity into the midst of the most abandoned of her sex, and appease the anger and calm the passions of guilty men—to whom the coarse ribaldry, the loathsome filth, and the tomb-like uncleanness of soul, which characterised the inmates of a jail, were no barrier to the sun-like beams of her penetrating Christian love—that woman—the observer of no ordinances, the acknowledger of neither Bishop nor Presbyter, member of neither Protestant

nor Catholic Church—could not have stood the test of any of the Churches. She was a QUAKER—and her name was ELIZABETH FRY.

It is difficult sometimes to return in memory to the prejudices, the indifference, and the doubt with which great works have been regarded in their commencement: it is difficult to realise the state of feeling which made a given labour necessary, but which now no longer exists, the very labour which it called forth having driven it away almost from our recollections. But the corn of wheat, which first fell into the ground, abiding now no longer alone, but bringing forth much fruit, must not be forgotten. Not many years has the tomb closed over the remains of a humbler and less known labourer in the vineyard of God, than any that I have mentioned. Placed in early life upon one of those streams of social good, the channels of which Society scoops out for herself, and in which the majority of her sons are content, and wisely content, to bear their portion of the freight of human duty,—he of whom I speak devoted himself to the service of the Christian ministry. For many years he was happy and content to do the work of an evangelist among his neighbours and parishioners, shedding the light of a pure heart upon their daily lives, healing the bitterness of their sorrows by the overflowing balsam of his sympathy, and each week assembling them together to point out to them again the brightening way of truth and heaven. At length his heart was smitten with the thought of those who never saw him, and whom he never saw. Behind the goodly array of pure young faces, of sober manhood, and reverend old age, that stood before him in the Church—behind the attentive countenances, the cleanly robes and the decorous manners which the Lord's day

weekly called before him—his mind's eye saw a gathering group of guilt, intemperance, and crime—of sorrowing, sinning men and women, and of children, with their tears of pain drying upon their unwashed cheeks. In the very midst of those who came to him to hear the sounds of peace and holiness in that happy temple, his soul filled with the thoughts of those who never came. As he stood upon the steps of the doors which at his touch were to throw open to him homes of cheerful innocence and competence, radiant with a welcome to himself, his heart grew full and heavy with the remembrance of those at whose door he never stopped, and who never sat at good men's feasts. He thought of those great cities in his own young country, of those greater cities in other lands, older in sorrows, and more crowded with crime. His own more limited range among the poor of his prosperous, healthy village-town, satisfied not the craving of his sympathy with the wide-spread humanity that pined in neglected sorrow, and uncombated vice. He threw up his easy, happy charge, he went to the nearest great city, to study and to alleviate its unseen woes, and to stir up the heart of philanthropy and religion to the obligation and necessity of this work. Now that Bishops organise large companies of Missionaries for this very work; now that Town Missions send forth their hundreds of labourers; now that almost every considerable society of Christians in our large towns bears a part in this holy undertaking, as an obvious and indispensable part of their Christian duty,—it is difficult to believe how new and strange this very work appeared, even to the best of men, twenty years ago—and how this apostle of the neglected, this remembrancer of the forgotten, toiled to convince men's judgments, and to satisfy their hearts

of the possibility of taking religion and hope into the very homes of the poor.

Yes ! I remember him when he landed on these shores, with that countenance, the light whereof was a divine charity. I remember him when he came among us, new from the actual personal fulfilment of his own scheme, and about to return to it again, to die in it. Yes ! I remember him, with his thrilling tones, and his overflowing heart, and his consecrated life, and I remember, too, that at that time there was no such thing in this country as a Domestic Mission to the outcast of society, and the neglected and forgotten of Christian assemblies, and that most men thought that there never could be !

This man, so full of purity, so rich in human tenderness, so affluent in divine forbearance—this man, the friend of the heroic Follen, the spiritual brother of the high-souled Channing, and yet the daily companion of the hardest and most neglected beings in the streets of Boston—was a UNITARIAN, and his name was TUCKERMAN.

Now to which of all these men will even the Bigot venture to deny a place within the Infinite Father's all-comprehending mercy ?—a place in the reverent regards of the great human family ? a place in the heaven of the just made perfect ?—which of all these will he venture, in any assembly of the good and wise on earth, to declare unfit to share in the inheritance he anticipates for himself ? Whichsoever of these sainted men is the object of his intolerant presumption, there is not one high soul in the world that will cry Amen to his anathema. And yet to the Roman Catholic I say, here, in this group, is to be found almost every possible form of schism from the unity of your Church ! To the Church

of England man, I say, here are a Quaker and a Unitarian ! To the Unitarian, I say, here is the professor of what you call the stern and gloomy faith of Calvin, here the submissive subject of the See of Rome ! Notwithstanding, as surely as our Lord said of the little children, " of such is the kingdom of heaven," we may say of these men, of such is the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are writ in heaven ! When you ask me, then, for the essentials of Christianity, I point you to the belief these men had in *common* ! When you ask me for the Holy Catholic faith, I tell you, it is *there* ! It was not the belief in transubstantiation in one, or the belief in episcopal ordination in another, or a belief in vicarious sacrifice in another, or the neglect of public religious ordinances in another, or the mental adoption of the doctrine of the divine unity in another—that made of him a child of God, and a true follower of Jesus Christ ; but it was that which each had in addition, that which each had, I will say, in superiority, to these special characteristics of his individual faith—first, a hearty sincerity in the belief he did profess ; and, secondly, an actual incorporation into his own spiritual being, of the life and mind of Jesus Christ.

There is one possible conclusion, however, from these considerations, against which I would earnestly warn you ; it is the adoption, as any result of this survey, of that infidel and worldly latitudinarianism, which proclaims it as indifferent, what mode of faith the individual mind adopts or professes. The survey of the lives of these great and good men teaches us nothing of the kind. Each one of these men commenced, as the very basis of his spiritual existence, with being earnest and sincere in his own professions and belief. Each one of them laid the founda-

tion of his character in serious thought, and in honest confession.

We are not to stand before this noble army of holy men, and, as a result of the contemplation of their excellency and their glory, say, "then it is indifferent what form of Christianity we shall profess—any is sufficient, all are good." Do we suppose that was the spirit in which they formed their faith? On the contrary, these men wrought out their faith with the profoundest anxiety, and took reverently to their souls every word of God. Fenelon would have been no Fenelon had he been merely a conforming Catholic, and not a true and earnest man. Reginald Heber would have been no confessor had he been in heart a Unitarian or a Congregationalist.

These things cannot be. Nothing great or good is ever founded on a lie. These men were sincere; and though we may not be able to see how the specialities of their belief influenced their characters, they were without a doubt wrought deeply into the tissue of their souls, were not put on as a garment in which to go forth to meet the world, or in an easy indifference as to what profession they should make, but formed a genuine part of their individual religious being. It was this very earnestness, this profoundness and sincerity of individual conviction, that made Christianity to them so intense and vital an influence. They received the faith of Jesus Christ under that form which appeared to them, after grave reflection, to be the purest and the best; and henceforth it could exist as a personal influence in no other form whatever to their hearts. When will men see that he to whom all faiths are alike has no earnest faith at all? It is the very lesson of these men's lives that they had convictions, determinate convictions, convictions that

made them what they were, and that they were faithful to them.

It is indeed a holy and delightful thought, that we may also conclude, (without denying the reality, and to the men the necessity, of those special and distinctive peculiarities in which the common faith of Christ approved itself respectively to their consciences,) that the great saving power of their faith consisted, not in that which distinguished them from one another, but in that common treasure which lay at the foundation of all their differences, in that obedience to God, that love to Christ, that charity to man, that hope of heaven, in which they all rejoiced together; that carefulness of mind with which they sought the truth; that conscientious fidelity with which they maintained it; that vigilant self-discipline with which they applied its lessons: and that joyful hope with which they rested on its promises. —

It is not for me, my friends, to speak of the holy lessons to which this temple shall, from week to week, be devoted, in the building up of human souls for the conflicts of earth, and the inheritance of heaven. But I believe I may with certainty specify two general objects in its erection; that it stands as an offering to sincerity, to the sacredness of the individual conscience, and as the provision of an altar for an honest and truthful sacrifice, such as they who come here may truthfully and earnestly offer: and that, in the next place, it stands in determined Protest against those accretions and additions which Churches too generally enforce upon Christian belief, as essential to salvation, and in restoration of that old and only catholic Christianity which is common to all Churches, though obscured and weakened in so many.

For we, too, in common with all the holy men whose

+ See Martineau's Pious & Retrospect p 12

lives and characters we have been considering—we, too, believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth—we, too, in common with all these holy men, believe that he hath, in his merciful providence, sent Jesus Christ to turn away every one of us from his iniquities, and to be the way, the truth, and the life to us—and we, too, in common with all these holy men, look forward to a life beyond the valley of the shadow, where our sins and our sorrows shall be lost in the light of the benign presence of God; and trusting in the mercy of Him who forgiveth, we long, with them, to be prepared, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the holy spirit, and by love unfeigned, to join that blest assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.—AMEN.

NOTE.

IN the above Sermon—designed to promote a feeling of catholic charity, in an audience consisting of a variety of denominations—the question remains unsolved, and indeed unattempted, Does any one of these forms of Christian doctrine accord more than the rest with the teachings of the New Testament, and is any one more conducive than the rest to the realization of Christian life and character? That this must be the case with some one or other of them, no one can doubt, for no one can pay attention to their several characteristics, and believe them to be identical in their essence or in their influence. That any one of them actually reaches the ideal standard which these two tests imply, is more than the writer at least is able to assert. He is much more disposed to believe that each of these forms of Faith contains a portion—and the purest and most vital portion—of Christian truth and influence; but that in actual development, that portion in each Church suffers from a relative exaggeration, or a relative neglect—the exaggeration leading to an exclusion of other important principles, necessary to be associated with it in an integral Faith—and the neglect leading to a gradual and half unconscious admission of other and inferior principles, which ultimately predominate and overwhelm it. The apparent result of this view is Eclecticism. But Eclecticism is an artificial and critical process, landing us in a result which is usually destitute of all homogeneity, a collection from without, under the guidance of the judgment,

rather than a natural integral production of the soul within. It is a kind of Peripateticism among the sects—alternately assimilating and rejecting the elements of actually existing Churches. Surely the old, but rarely realized, idea, of a recurrence to the New Testament itself, as containing the spirit of Christianity in its purest form, and to the life of Jesus Christ, as affording the only perfect instance of that spirit exemplified in humanity, involves a far sounder principle. It is a truth often overlooked in these discussions, but nevertheless to be borne carefully in mind, that no human being can tell on what proportion the peculiarities, the *differentia* of the Roman Catholic form of Christianity, entered into the composition of the mind and character of Fenelon—any more than he can tell in what proportion Calvinism entered into the spiritual fabric of Howard, or Unitarianism into that of Tuckerman. It may be—and this is probably nearer the truth—that the distinctive peculiarities of their special forms of faith were in each case the subordinate parts of their spiritual system—that the common essential Christian truth excluded from none of their systems, but, lying at the base of all, was the great element in their personal and actuating faith; and that this fact was precisely the influence which made them the excellent men they were—as it is probably the fact which seems to make men of the highest spiritual excellence almost always of one interior family and creed.

A great mind is able to penetrate beyond the outworks of its creed, and lay hold of the citadel. But ordinary minds rest in those very outworks. With them the accretions are the great thing: and therefore it is, that the purification of popular belief is a work of great necessity still, for in the subordinate and comparatively uninfluential elements of the various prevailing forms of Christian belief, pressed upon the notice of the general mind, as they are, by the very differences and antagonism they create, the ordinary mind takes its chief position, and of these it takes the firmest hold. The doctrine, then, of this Sermon—the salvability of all these good and great men of every Church, does not alter the duty of

preventing the saving truth, which they were able to discern and make their own through all that surrounded it, from being overwhelmed and paralyzed by accretions—preventing in fact the saving truth from being saving to the hearts of the multitude.

The truth appears therefore to stand thus : Each Christian Church contains within itself the means of salvation, and the essentials of Truth—but each contains them in various degrees of development, some having them more perfect in one direction, others in another. By the first of these positions, we are bound to a universal charity—by the second, to mutual help, correction and enlightenment. Far from monopolizing all Christian truth—still less all Christian excellence—and less still, all Christian salvation—for that religious body to which the writer belongs—he yet should say, if by so vague a word he could denote his own version of the Christian Faith, that among prevailing systems the theory of Unitarianism appears to him to be in itself the purest, the highest, and the most enduring; and when it shall have engaged in its development and application a larger number of the best minds of the community, and the attention of its adherents shall not be engrossed in its dogmatical defence (as by the necessity of its position is too much now the case), it must necessarily produce loftier and more extended spiritual results than the world has ever yet witnessed—that it must necessarily produce the highest characters, and the greatest number of them : that is to say, the belief in one undivided and infinite God, our Father, is in itself, and in its influences, necessarily higher and holier than the present scholastic division of that unity into natures and persons;—the belief that God was as fully manifested in Jesus Christ, as the Divine can be in the Human, affords a better support and guide to our spiritual nature, than the dogma that Christ himself was the Infinite God;—the desire to partake of the divine nature in Christ, and to grow up into a resemblance in all things unto him which is our Head, is a more holy and influential desire for the heart of man, than a reception of

the doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice, a substituted righteousness and a substituted punishment ;—and, finally, a prospect of futurity, in which the fruits of the seeds sown in this life, whether they be good or whether they be evil, shall be reaped by each man in a world of greater light and higher progress beyond the grave, is in itself truer, and in its influences more efficient, than a belief in the ordinary twofold division of an everlasting Heaven and an everlasting Hell, into one or other of which each man is to depart at his resurrection.

This form of Christianity, then, which is at present distinguished from others by the designation “Unitarianism,” is still, in the writer’s opinion, a very noble thing to avow—a very righteous and holy cause for which to labour and to suffer reproach.

THE END.

“OWE NO MAN ANYTHING;”

A DISCOURSE

ON

COMMERCIAL MORALS,

PREACHED IN

HOPE STREET CHURCH, LIVERPOOL

ON SUNDAY, NOV. 30, 1856,

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS & ROBERTS,

PATERNOSTER ROW.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WOODFALL AND KINDER,
ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET.

P R E F A C E.

THE questions discussed in these pages are usually supposed to be less proper to the Pulpit than to the Exchange. Yet the Minister of a congregation drawn chiefly from the mercantile classes of a modern Tyre, cannot be indifferent to the special duties and temptations of the daily life around him; and may now and then feel oppressed by a “burthen” of warning convictions, of which it would be unfaithful not to deliver his conscience. Moved by such impulse, the preacher prepared the following Sermon in the course of his ordinary ministrations. It is published by the desire of many of its hearers, whose judgment, on matters of commercial morality, is formed from large experience as well as conscientious reflection. In the printed text are a few passages which they will not recognise, and which would have extended the Sermon beyond the limits usually conceded to the preacher.

Park Nook, Prince's Park, Liverpool,

Dec. 10, 1856.

shops and offices would be open next morning? How many acres, and houses, and ships would stand in the same names? If, by a universal winding-up, every property was to go home to its owner, every engagement to be pressed into realization, and all fictitious footing to be destroyed, how many that are now first would be last,—when the balance was struck and the new leaf turned,—and the last first? So utterly at variance with the whole social system appears the Apostle's precept, that it is no wonder if next in his mind to the conception of a World out of debt, stood the belief of the World at its end. If it be wrong to owe, it is not right to borrow; and if no man may borrow, neither may any lend; and if no lending be allowed, the fertilizing flow of capital from its head waters to the thirsty spots of society is at an end; the world is gorged at one place and starved at another, with no health at either: unknown resources of the earth and ocean, of the quarry and the mine, of the forest and the field, sleep unused, for want of a magic power, which is *there* all the while if we will but let it move. Were it left to the actual possessors of wealth alone to propel it on its course, and work it through its applications, who can say how slow would be the productiveness of industry, and how scanty the exchanges of nations?

Yet, when we turn from this outside action on the World to the inner effects on Individual Character, we can scarcely miss a certain truthful charm in the precept, "Owe no man anything, but to love one

another." To have no debt but the eternal debt of love,—to pay freely to affection without arrest from the preference-claims of justice undischarged,—to disengage the problems of a pure heart from oppressive and limiting conditions,—to live among men with no other accounts than we have with our children and our God,—this surely is to escape from a thousand fears and temptations, and win the very liberty of faith. This freedom from entanglement is the goal which most men hope to reach ; and in struggling towards it, the conscientious carry the fetters of many a scruple, and the heedless slip the foot on dangerous ground. This clear state is, by general consent, the position appropriate to those who are devoted to the higher concerns of our humanity,—the servants of Truth, the interpreters of Beauty, the guides of Nations, the prophets of Religion. It is the preparation, without which few would wish to face the greater crises of experience,—the prostration of sorrow, the call to heroic duty, the visible approach of death ! If then you would feel it well to be free of care, when you step into the shadow of sacred hours or go home to the embrace of God ; if the nobler and more ideal functions of life revolt from money complications ; if an embarrassed philosopher, — an indebted bishop, — a bailiff in the scientific observatory or the prophet's chamber,—affords an image of humiliating incongruity ; there must be a region of human character,—and *that* the highest,—in which the Apostle's precept emerges from an econo-

mic absurdity into a native and congenial wisdom. We might treat it therefore as a "Counsel of Perfection ;"—as a rule not perhaps unconditionally binding on all of us as we are, but still indicating the limit towards which all are to press, and which "as many as would be perfect" will seize at once. There are apparently cases in human life in which our rules describe and distinguish not so much the *absolutely right and wrong*, as *the better and the worse* ; and we may recommend and revere the greater, without warrant altogether to condemn the less. Within the individual conscience indeed,—in the private account between the soul and her God,—this sliding scale of duty has no place : *there*, the *better intimation* is the *sole escape* from guilt ; and whatever is short of our best possibility must incur the remorse of absolute wrong. But the bystander knows not the range and register of each private soul ; he cannot tell how far up the ascent of goodness her conscious insight goes ; and though he may exhibit and dispose in their rightful glory all the steps, from their base on earth to their landing in heaven, he may condemn those persons only who either fail to reach what all men see, or fall from a rank they had already seized ; and he must not presume to demand from every chance neighbour today a height of excellence that may not be discerned until tomorrow. God only knows the wise, deep hearts to which he has revealed high missions with the clearness of a heavenly call ; and when his summons draws forth the Saints and Heroines of humanity, it is for

us to own indeed and revere the voice, but not to repeat it in the market-place and at the corners of the streets, requiring every earnest man to become a St. Francis, and every gifted lady a Florence Nightingale.

Even a "Counsel of Perfection," however, must be reconcileable with the conditions of human life through which we are to rise into harmony with it. The same Holy Will is Lawgiver for the private conscience and for the social world; and there can be no real variance between the highest obligations of the one and the imperious exigencies of the other. Grant that the injunction "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" may have had some reference to an expected close of human things, and may belong to the same class with the inference, "The time is short," "I would have you without anxiety." Still, the temper which is alone suitable to the sublimest moment cannot be out of place in any other: the last act of the piece is but the development of all the rest; when the soul achieves the catastrophe to which every incident and experience has converged. To the moral attitude and position most fit for a world drifting towards its account there must be *something analogous* in the world while yet continuous: nor can there be one rule of good for its probation, and another for its judgment. I venture therefore to believe that *the spirit*, the *mood of mind*, the conscious *security against injuring others*, the *exemption from disabling cares*, the *openness to genial affection*, implied in the Apostle's words, are for ever

and for all men inherent elements of the Christian character; and if we sacredly guard these, whilst we translate his precept into terms of continuous duration and an abiding world, it will prove to have still for us its moral and its rebuke.

It would no doubt be pedantic to interpret the words "Owe no man anything" into a universal obligation to the ready-money system. In a world whose transactions take time, and where the circle of exchange is of wide circumference, an interval, often considerable, must interpose between the commencement and the completion of an engagement; and it were absurd to make a sin out of this necessary incident of commerce, and to regard as an offender every man who has a pending compact. Nay, it is possibly this period of suspense—when men part with their own in reliance on another, and sleep soundly not amid guarded possessions but with their treasures scattered to the four quarters of the earth, and look as proudly on a few names in their books, as they would on broad acres of park or field;—that gives scope to the moral qualities exercised in mercantile affairs;—the cautious vigilance at first, the honourable trust at last, the scrupulous pause before the promise, the sacred firmness afterwards. The merchant who has a credit at the bank, or insured goods afloat, in clear excess of his existing obligations can, with only formal correctness, be said to "owe anything." How long, under such conditions, the actual settlement may remain in suspense, is indeed an im-

portant problem of *moral prudence*. The term of credit must vary in different affairs. Its sweep of duration should follow as closely as possible that of the reciprocal dealings themselves; a *week's* account being as long for retail purchases in the next street, as a *year* for exchanges across half the world. Whoever requires more time than this rule would give him, and has become dependent on further delay, has clear warning that his footing is unsound. Credit is essentially a reliance upon character during the currency of a transaction; and with the cycle of the transaction it should ever be susceptible of close. Restrained within these limits, the mere existence of incomplete and unrealized transactions constitutes no offence against the Apostle's precept, *provided the balance-sheet which records them be at every moment unambiguously right*, and be reviewed at intervals too short for danger to creep in. This is the one point on which the question of *integrity* surely turns. And here it is that, to the eye of the mere outward observer, the modern notions of honour seem to be in danger of deplorable decline. There ought to be no difference on these questions between the invariable sentiment of the Christian Moralist and the feeling of the man of business. But in the rapid expansion of relations and the haste of human affairs practices slide insensibly into existence and get a footing as usages, before any conscience has time to estimate them; and when they have won the sanction of prescription, they soon shape consciences to suit

them, and laugh at the moral critic as a simpleton, and hurry on to the crash of social retribution.

Thus, one thing, I must confess, has ever remained a mystery to me, and seems unmistakeably to violate the Apostle's precept "Owe no man anything;"—that a man who *has nothing* should feel easy in *borrowing something*; or a man that has *half*, in borrowing *double*. If indeed the loan be virtually or contingently a *gift*, from persons able and anxious to serve him at such cost, there may be nothing to condemn. And only thus, you will perhaps assure me, can the case really occur; for in the open market such a resourceless borrower could gain no attention. But there are countless intermediate instances, constituting probably nine-tenths of the whole, in which by appeal to the goodnature of friends, or the trustingness of sisters and other relatives, a trader whom no one purposes to endow and whose bond no money broker would take up, comes into command of funds for which he cannot give security. In such case he undertakes a trust which he is not in condition to assume. It is not enough that he is conscious of the *will*,—he is bound to know his *power*,—to discharge it. Failing this, he does but hand over to another the risks which are nominally his own—a thing from which surely it needs no generosity, and but little nicety of justice, to shrink. I know it is said, that superfluous capital is glad to meet with empty-handed capacity and character to turn it to account. As a rule, however, if those hands have

always been empty, I should doubt their fitness to become suddenly full : and if they eagerly take what is offered and betray no inner suspicion of danger, I doubt the fineness and solidity of character, which are assumed as the ground of trust. The abundance of capital will be a moral curse, if it tempts us to invert the healthy order of nature and old usage, . . . that a man must earn for himself ere he has a right to borrow from another, and must mortgage what he has for the use of what he has not. The scruple is not less wise than it is conscientious which forbids us *to take on trust more than we can give in pledge*: and whoever is in haste to break through its restraints is anxious to trade upon a high character which he has not resolution to attain. It is the prior discipline of care and patience, the Spartan bread of toil and self-denial, the slow command of wages saved, the cautious use of that incipient store, that lay the true foundation for the merchant's thrift and faithfulness ; and in proportion as this schooling is dispensed with, and great resources are flung into the hands of mere administrative agents, who touch what is others' ere they have handled their own, we must expect the spread of looseness and dishonour.

The same principle which condemns hollowness at the beginning forbids fictitious inflation in the continuance of a business, and requires of every honest man *a strict and well-ascertained limit to the transactions which he bases on a given capital*. I am not so presumptuous as to pronounce the ratio of that limit.

I know well that it will be differently stated by judges of equal uprightness and experience, and that it cannot be constant for every kind of mercantile concern. But a right limit for each there assuredly *is*; and whoever has not a clear conception where it lies in his own affairs, and does not keep so far within it as to forego advantage to himself rather than bring hazard upon others, is chargeable, if not with fraudulent intent, at least with unprincipled incompetency. Every engagement taken beyond that line he has a decreasing chance of fulfilling; every new creditor is more likely to become his victim; every fresh stock-taking to show less manageable figures. The appetite for extension, once having passed the healthy bounds, grows voracious as an atrophy; the business consumes whatever it can lay hands upon, and dies itself mere skin and bone. The reckless practice of incurring immense liabilities with no reserved base at all, or only enough to support a small speculative average of differences, occupies in reality, be the suffrages in its favour ever so many, no higher moral level than the turf or the gaming-table. And if this is true of *bond fide* trade, overhanging too far and towering too high for its area of support, what shall we say of that spurious traffic in the mere vicissitudes of price, which is conducted without any real exchange by men who have simply the hardihood to bet beyond their means, and in which none can gain but by another's loss? What is it that makes commerce an honourable and humanising thing?—that mutual

advantage is inseparable from it. What is it that makes gambling detestable?—that mutual advantage is impossible in it. And by this certain mark, with the attendant contrast of temper and habits it implies, may any eye distinguish the sphere of creditable business from that of illicit cupidity. The observer of human life cannot fail to remark that the dispositions of men are largely influenced by the kind of property which is their immediate concern. In landed estate there is a fiduciary element which forbids the idea of Duty entirely to escape. The organism of manufacturing industry calls out the faculties for administering capital and governing men, and disciplines the mind to concentration and force. Legitimate commerce, living nearer to the fluctuating margin of affairs and directly entangled in a world-wide net-work of relations, encourages flexibility and breadth more than sustained energy, inclines to the quick venture rather than the sure toil, and creates a taste for the generous more than for the just. The temptations deepen as the wealth that is handled exchanges a fixed for a speculative character. And there is something intrinsically perilous and demoralising in habitual dealings with values highly precarious and sensitive to the breath of mere opinion; and unless they are restrained about a solid nucleus of real transactions with material wealth they produce a fever of imagination and dizziness of head, to be feared by all who have an eye of reverence for the

ends of life, and mean to keep their seat till the true goal is reached.

X On similar grounds it strikes the mere observing moralist as strange that the question can ever be raised; how long an insolvent, after discovering the posture of his affairs, may continue his business in hope of a favourable turn. The answer of unsophisticated honesty would assuredly be,—Not for one hour on his own responsibility. If counsellors, whose interest gives them a title to advise, after knowing the whole, recommend him to go on, I do not say that the scruple may not be fairly overcome; or if his deficiency is simply due to an unwarrantable style of living, and its conquest is clearly within the reach of practicable retrenchment, he may fairly work through his secret by resolute self-denial. But otherwise, he is no longer master of his own affairs, and is at once usurper and deceiver every hour that he wields them. He can have no right to stake the interests of his creditors still deeper on new transactions, based upon a lying credit, carried on with the face of a hypocrite, and contingent on successful dissimulation. He is reduced to the condition in which, having nothing of his own, he uses the resources of others, not only without security but without their leave; treacherously availing himself of the position of power in which their past confidence has misplaced him. It is no sufficient excuse that he has sanguine expectations of benefiting them;—the time has come when their

voice, not his, must pronounce upon this hope. In him it coincides too nearly with the procrastination of cowardice and the dread of shame, to avoid the suspicion of self-deception. And the cases, it will be admitted, are actually rare, in which the avowal of failure has been escaped or alleviated by postponement; while the usual story of delay tells us of an ever-deepening plunge into entanglement, from which little is extricated at last but the stripped and lacerated personality of the bankrupt himself. It is indeed notorious that the plea of concern for "the estate" is for the most part a vain pretence, and that concealment is continued from desire to stave off the evil day;—from that skulking fear to confess a wrong which attends the mere feeble and flaccid purpose to do the right. From no temper is so little to be hoped in a world of ceaseless conflict between good and ill. A man vigorously just, conscious of double guilt under evasion and delay, will never rest till he has brought his penalty upon his head, and has his hand set free for the work of reparation; he will be eager for the pain which first arrests the injury he has done. And whoever is otherwise minded betrays that he shrinks from suffering, but in comparison cares not for the sin. Far be it from any Christian heart to refuse gentle and considerate treatment to each erring man: only let it not be on guilty terms; let it be, not for his continuance but for his return; not a human easiness, but a divine recall. The defences frequently put forth for the questionable usages

on which I have touched, seem to shed a painful light upon the inner ethics of modern trade. Indicating as they do a wide-spread confusion of sentiment, a drifting judgment without moral compass to steer by in newly-opening latitudes of human affairs, they are more startling to the thoughtful observer than the exceptional cases of individual fraud which less corrupt the popular fancy, because they speak more plainly for themselves.

I am profoundly conscious of the intricacy of many of the problems which lie within the topic I have touched, and possibly the simple aspect which they present to a spectator from without may be qualified by other relations more removed from sight. But there is also a fresh source of moral danger in this very complexity of modern business, and the abstract mode in which it is carried on. In simple times, the process of buying and selling is a living, concrete affair, between visible persons; in which man meets man, looks him in the face, crosses his threshold, can picture to himself his family, and has felt the grasp of his hand. Thus, the human affections, the natural feelings that kindle beneath the light of another's eye, come in aid of mercantile integrity and truth. Who would not be more ashamed of a slipperiness towards one whose respectable image is in his mind, than towards a mere name upon his books? In proportion as men's mutual affairs become complicated, the personal element is superseded by files of paper forms; the vast majority of the people with whom you deal are out of

sight, and business almost ceases to be human, and works itself by a kind of mechanical fate. It becomes apparently a dealing, less with men than with things. It requires in this state an intenser and more spontaneous conscience to keep it right. The moral significance of acts has to be traced through technical instruments and mystifying symbols, which, even to the most practised interpreter, keep the concrete facts at a distance from the imagination. Could all the papers of an insolvent house be suddenly translated into the actual life they represent,—could the sorrows they contain look out from their midst, the broken promises speak, the bitter injuries complain, the scattered families protest,—the blindest would see the truth, and the hardest be pierced with compunction. But, as it is, the real story is never read ; it is vain to expect a just appreciation of its incidents, one by one ; as well might you appeal to repentance through an algebraic formula, or ask a personal affection for the lay-figures of a lawyer's argument. And as the moral sense is less helped by the natural affections, so is the understanding more apt to be bewildered by the tangle of intricate relations, and to lose its directness and accuracy of vision. Hence again a further risk of unsteady uprightness ; for nothing so favours the chances of evil as a hazy and puzzled mind, that cannot see its way, and knows not precisely whereabouts it is. It is in this winking twilight that the tempter ever comes, and makes his stealthy approaches to the groping, stumbling will. It was the proverbial com-

 plaint of garrulous Greece, that "the tongue is apt to outrun the mind;" and it might be the confession of practical England, that action blunders on in front of thought, and therefore at the mercy of many a poor decoy. The haste of our business is too much for the slowness of our genius; and we find ourselves in the midst of action ere we well know what we ought to do. The telegraph asks a question and must be charged with a reply. The foreign post is off tonight and will not wait till we have slept. The broker is in the office with the transfer in his hand. The message flies,—half reason and half risk. The letter is dispatched with orders today, and the calculation how to meet them will be gone-into tomorrow. The signature flows from the rapid pen, and the unravelled threads of the problem in the mind are cut at a stroke. Who can deny the fortuitous settlement every day of a thousand questions involving right and wrong, on which a prior clearness of judgment is alone qualified to pronounce? And meanwhile the imagination, with less and less precise conception of the parts and human details, is more and more dazzled by the vast sweep of the whole; and is borne further away from the simple integrities by dreams of immeasurable enterprise. It is not wonderful that in the double giddiness of indistinctness within and magnitude without, the moral equilibrium is lost, and instances are frequent of humiliating fall.

Whether, in the ethics of commerce, "the former times were better than these," I would not venture

to pronounce. If any one wishes to show from the annals of fraud, that in England every article of traffic was *always* adulterated, and an equal percentage of merchants and bankers, directors and clerks, were *always* knaves, I care not to answer him. The duty of the Christian preacher is to compare the morals of his day, not with those of another age, but with the standard, at once rational and revealed, of eternal rectitude. From the appeal to *that* standard, the consciousness of it, nay, the belief in it, I fear indeed we are receding. Of any higher rule of obligation than the expectations and mutual understandings of men, of any possible guilt in usages notoriously current, and against which every one may be on his guard, it is rare to find even a suspicion in the world. Every question is run up into some human custom and convention, and there stops and is laid to rest: as if many voices and much time could make and unmake right and wrong, and it were ours to invent our own laws instead of interpreting and applying God's. This is the root of all our ill. So long as Honour stands with us for no more than a social compact, a level veracity between man and man, it will sway and waver with the fitful winds of opinion, having no rule but the average expectation, no clue through the snares of new problems, no inspiration beyond the ambition of decent repute. It is in the power of this mere secular temper, as by a corrupting touch, soon to turn the gold of our ancient truth into dross; till we are startled by frightful exposures, and amid the

false repose of civilization we hear again the Everlasting Voice, "Shall I call them pure that have the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?" Honour among men is never safe till it passes out beyond them and becomes an understanding and sympathy with God, an embodiment in us of his ever living righteousness. Once restored to its true devoutness, lifted from a human promise to a Divine allegiance, it escapes the region of fluctuation, and acquires an instinct of resistance to the sophistries of selfishness and the hurry of passion. He who is possessed by its spirit is alone likely to thread a faithful way through the dangers of a complex system. For he has an inner hatred of confusion, as the very nest of all potential wrong. He thirsts for perfect clearness in his moral light; and while any dimness lingers in his conscience, he reverently fears to stir a foot. First, he must sweep every seeming ambush out and see whether guilt be there, and then he can advance with firmness and with joy. Only to the upright, whose heart is lifted thus, does the promised "Light arise in darkness." May the reproach not fall upon this age, that such "Faithful are failing from among men:" but still may the words be true, that, whether our merchants are princes or not, our "traffickers are the *honourable* of the earth!"

PARTING WORDS :

A DISCOURSE,

PREACHED, SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 1857,

IN

HOPE STREET CHURCH, LIVERPOOL,

ON CLOSING A MINISTRY OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU.

Published by desire of the Congregation.

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A DISCOURSE,

ETC.

1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 7.

“Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase.”

SINKING deep into these words, I touch the only ground of firm anchorage in this agitating hour. ‘I am nothing ; God is all : let me pass into his will ; let me hold on to Him, the Rock ; and let the passionate tide of grief, and fear, and love sweep by !’ In that thought alone is there any settled calm. When the floods rise high, we are driven from every earthly rest, and forced upon the wing into the upper air. There are times when we *must* set our fluctuating life at a distance beneath us, and float in the great heaven, if we would not be lost ; when we are glad to merge ourselves away into a speck of insignificance, and lessen the size of all things mutable and sorrowful by the vastness of the Divine light and space. Eternal things, and they alone, spread a blessed quiet behind the changes of our humanity,—an expanse of mountain verdure over

which the sunshine and the shadows play; and *there* we must lay to rest the sadness of an evanescent life. So let it be with us this hour. Let me escape from myself into Him, of whose husbandry I have been the transient instrument; who gave the seed to plant his field, and the showers to water it, and will never cease to provide the increase. And even from you, dear friends, whose parting looks, if seen alone, would too much move me, let me half escape into the presence of an august band, and steady my uncertain eye by fixing it on those who once were with us, but have passed to the service of a higher world. Yes! those close-filled seats are far from including all I see; behind the visible congregation to which I speak there stands an invisible,—the comrades who once mingled their voices with our hymn,—elders that have laid their burden down,—children snatched at once from the threshold to the crown of life,—*all* that death has promoted from our poor company; and from their shadowy ranks many a sacred image seems to look at me, and many a familiar tone to speak. Yet alas! I know it is but the echo of my own memory; and that “cloud of witnesses” sits silent in the back-ground of the scene. Else, it would shed the truest light upon the past we have spent together, could we know whether they yet think any thought or cherish any love born amid our worship here; whether any snatches of our earthly strains still blend with their saintlier praise; whether they live without change of

gospel under change of worlds. They may not tell us. Yet amid the silence of things, I would fain take courage and believe that, when we join to-day in our parting hymn, "The dead and living swell the sound." *Peace & Retrospect p. 17*

The twenty-five years of service which now reach their close, are much to the individual life, and crowded with the spoils of a retiring generation. For each of us, taken one by one, they have doubtless written a long epic story; and in the cabinet of our memory set many a tragedy, and wrung from our hearts lyrics without end. But in the life of a Church, still more in the history of humanity, such a period is but a little segment; barely enabling us to trace the course of movement; and forbidding even the presumptuous to take its measure. Change, however, perceptible change, there must be during an interval so considerable. No quarter-century can pass over a society and a religious connection so open as ours, without altering the proportions, if not shifting the centre, of development. And whoever has lived with us through that period, and can transport himself back in memory to its commencement, must be aware that the season has somewhat altered for our faith;—that the lights and shadows of our religious love fall not precisely as they did;—that the words and thoughts which stir us to our depths are not the same;—that the tone of belief and unbelief, the pressure of temptation, the tendencies of reverence and admiration, are all different;—that our

relations to the great Christendom of the Past and Present are more genial and domestic, and are passing from outer courtesy to inner sympathy: so that, on the whole, were it possible to reproduce exactly the administration of religion which adequately served the exigencies of the last generation, it would scarcely assuage our living thirst, or find the present secret of our souls. Leave it to narrow-hearted men to treat this change as a reproach to this age or a pride to that, and to dispute whether the morning twilight is fairer than the evening, and spring in the northern hemisphere better than in the southern. Let us rather recognise the seasonal order of God, who adjusts the whole, and sees that it is good. His truth is infinite and is never rounded off; his light an everlasting stream that cannot cease to flow; and so long as faithful men shall humble themselves to be his organs, He will not want for new interpreters. In the very reaction of each period from the spirit of its predecessor, we may see a blessed law of providential oscillation, ever completing the beat of each movement of progress, and sweeping past every resting-point of human vanity. It is the wants of to-day that invite and awaken the strength of to-morrow. Into the spaces of thought and love left cold and vacant in one age rush the enthusiasms of the next; if perhaps by leaving dry and standing some deserted truth, the reflux of a third age will yet correct it. We are all of us children of our time; its temperature reaches to the very pulses of

our heart ; and when we speak forth what it gives us to say, we must indeed be *different* from our fathers, but are no *wiser*, unless we disclaim everything but simplicity and faithfulness. With genuine honour then for my predecessors,—with no higher ambition than to be deemed worthy to stand in their succession and be sometimes named with Enfield, Houghton, Yates and Grundy,—I would yet, in surveying my ministry, lay open to you its characteristic conviction, and unreservedly confess its animating spirit. Against any truth committed to others I do not presume to measure it : each one must speak according as he discerns : whether it be little, or whether it be much, I know not ; I simply tell the trust which has possessed me from the beginning, and which, I believe, will hold me till I see better than “ as through a glass darkly.”

The one deep faith, then, which has determined my whole word and work among you, is in *The Living Union of God with our Humanity*. Long did this faith pine obscurely within me, ere it could find its way to any clear joy. It was not enough for me that God should,—as they say,—“ *exist* ;” it was needful to have assurance that He *lives*. It was a poor thought that He was the *beginning* of all, if He stood aloof from it in its *constancy*. It withered the inmost heart to believe that He dwelt and never stirred in the universal space, and delegated all to inexorable “ Laws ;”—laws that could never hear the most piercing shriek, and looked with stony eyes on the

upturned face of agony. It seemed to stain the very heaven to charge Him with the origin of human guilt, and represent Him as first moulding men into sin, and then punishing them out of it. A mere constructing and legislating God, satisfied to adjust "co-existencies" and establish "successions;" who filled the cold sky, and brooded over the waste sea, and watched upon the mountain-head, and embraced the waxing and waning moon, and suffered the tide of history to sweep through him without heeding its most passionate and surging waves;—a God who wrung from us a thousand sighs that never touched him, who broke us in remorse for ills that are not ours,—who drew to him, day and night without ceasing, moans of prayer he never answered;—such a One it was a vain attempt really to trust and love. At times the faith in him appeared but to turn the darkness of atheism into flame; and, in its light, the face of this blessed life and universe lost its fostering look, and seemed twisted into an Almighty sarcasm. Nor could I ever feel that the permanent stillness and personal inaccessibility of God was at all compensated by exceptional miracle. An occasional "message" rather serves to render more sensible and undeniable the *usual* absence and silence; nor can the "sender" well say to his servant,—“You go there”—without implying, “I stay here.” Merely to fling-in to the Deist’s “God of nature” an historical fragment of miracle does little to meet the exigencies of human piety. It is not “once upon a time,” it is not “now

and then,"—nor is it on the theatre of another's life to the exclusion of our own,—that we sigh to escape from the bound movements of nature into the free heart of God. We pine as prisoners, till we burst into the air of that *supernatural life which He lives eternally* : we are parched with a holy thirst, till we find contact with the running waters of his quick affection. Him *immediately* ; Him *in person* ; Him in whispers of the day, and eye to eye by night ; Him for a close refuge in temptation, not as a large thought of ours but as an Almightiness in himself ; Him ready with his moistening dews for the dry heart, and his breathings of hope for the sorrowing ; Him always and everywhere living for our holy trust, do we absolutely need for our repose, and wildly wander till we find.

We have no need to go far for this centre of rest ; nay, we have only to return home, and believe what is simplest in our own hearts and greatest in the words of Christ. Does the incubus of Nature oppress you ? Enter into the life of the Spirit, and you shall throw it off. Are you haunted by the constancy of Law ? Balance it by the perpetuity of Inspiration : and the solid fabric of the world will melt into a transparent mantle of incarnation. Whatever be the relation of God to the physical universe,—*for us*, who bear his image and receive his Christ, he is the Spirit "that bloweth where it listeth,"—"the Comforter" "that dwelleth in us and never ceaseth to be in us ;"—the Holy Guest abiding with the soul that

“hath the Father and the Son.” I know not how others may conceive the eternal life of God to pass,—in what field they would most readily seek his manifestation,—in what stirrings of power, his distinctive agency. But to me, I do confess, his presence in every lower realm would be a cold unreality,—a Pagan dream,—did I not trace him in the highest of all,—the conscious and knowing spirits of his children : for surely the empty sky, the dead of night, the Arctic frosts, could better spare him, than the overcharged heart and fevered life of our humanity. *There* it is that he has set what is likeliest to himself; and there that we must look for his favourite abode. Those simple faiths that come we know not whence, those dim suspicions of conscience that creep upon us with authoritative awe, that mysterious sense of an over-arching infinitude pierced with bursts of light when the clouds of our lower mind clear off,—nay, the common promptings of disinterested love, the call to self-sacrifice, the reverence for nobleness and beauty, what are they but the awakening touch of God’s indwelling life, the movement of his Spirit among the trembling strings? To the *private soul*, He thus reveals himself in its highest spontaneous affections, ever adding another grace and further insight to those who will be faithful with the first. To our *collective humanity* He comes in that great consent of spirits which arises in the presence of true heroism or sanctity, and constitutes the tendency of an age and the ultimate forces of history. Through all our natural

life, individual and social, is the supernatural inter-fused: and the ideal colours of heaven are spread through the substance of our experience to transfigure it. In us, however, there is ever a strife between the two. In *Christ alone* is the reconciliation perfect between the human and the divine; and of the blended natures, the lower yields as a captive, and is, in him, wholly taken up by the higher. This once, was God's idea purely realised. But the same two natures meet in us all: and he is but the exemplar of a perpetual incarnation,—of a living and constant union of God with our humanity.

Such is the faith which has possessed me, not simply as a topic of teaching, but as a principle of life. How far I may have been able to awaken it in you, and by its power to stir in your hearts the waters of healing and consecration, none but the Discerner of spirits knows. But for me it has relieved many problems, and unspeakably enriched the colours and deepened the whole perspective of experience. It has seemed an escape into the Gospel from the Law; and has justified affections that else were beyond their measure or without a plea. It has necessarily affected my teachings and ministry throughout; imparting to them, perhaps, a character of more intensity than breadth; but giving them the only tone in which the Heavenly Word ever passed across my spirit.

Hence, for instance, the urgency with which I have aspired to rise with you out of a religion of *Obe-*

dience into a religion of *Communion*: not only to leave behind the calculations of spiritual prudence and self-interest, but to emerge even from the anxieties of moral self-dependence, and trustfully pass into the hand of God. *Service* is for the distant; *Sympathy*, for the near. And when the Son of God himself speaks to our fellowship—"I call you not servants, I call you friends"—who shall blame those that cannot shape themselves to orders, but are freely moulded by the gentlest pressures of reverence and love? In spiritual things Resolution is weak, and soon drops the labouring oar; but Faith, spreading her sheet, catches a viewless power, and flies before the winds of heaven. Bare Ethical work under the Moral Law gives a certain Jewish hardness to our individuality: while of *Religion*, and emphatically of *the Gospel*, it is the function to dissolve the self-reliance utterly away, to lose the personal will in the tides of a Divine perfection, and let ourselves be reconciled by becoming one with the living Spirit of holiness. We have surely enough in this rough world, enough in the battle of affairs, enough in our inherited discipline and tone of thought, to secure the firmness of our self-respect; and to be well able to bear that mellowing of reverence and sweetening of temper, and modest elevation of trust, which flow from the conscious presence of God's life in our humanity.

Hence, too, it has lain very near to me, to foster among us *all the lesser religions* of our inner life—

the genuine admirations which flow into pure and genial hearts from objects short of the highest. The huge chasm which Protestantism usually sinks between "the creature and the Creator," between human loves and divine affection, has ever affrighted me with horror: and I have clung to the Catholic truth, that our veneration for the saints is a minor form of piety, akin in type to the devotion that passes finite bounds. Nature, Art, Character, present to the sincere eye a thousand resting-places for the upward look; aspects of things which, so far from detaining us below, constitute a hierarchy of Divine manifestation, and carry the vision in the ascending direction to the Light of lights. Let us open a kindly heart and take the daily graces, the most transitory beauty, hospitably in. They are just the provision for lifting us over the saddest reproach and most constant sorrow of our experience. Unaided by them, we are apt to carry on at once two different lives that never mingle, the ideal and the actual, the devout and the secular, and to dip in and out by force of influence or season, conscious of mechanical mixture without inner blending and identity. *Now* upon the grass of meditation, *now* on the dusty track of work, we are as if we stepped across the bar of sleep, and know not which is waking and which is dreaming. The violence of this transition is softened by the ministration of the lesser pieties—the wonder at wisdom, the veneration for goodness, the sense of truth and harmony, and the openness to

all the expressiveness of things. 'These affections, clearing out irreverence from the simplest duty, rudeness from the commonest speech, and deformity and negligence from everything, are blessed mediators between the absolutely Divine and the merely Human in our life, and bathe it in the baptismal waters of its first regeneration. I have thought it therefore not altogether foreign to the spirit of this place, to express and foster, as I could, every admiration that can carry the heart to what is purer and higher than itself, and bear it a little way towards the Highest of all. Tell me not that these lesser loves are dangerous as idols, and seduce the soul. As well might you put out the ranks of angels, to secure our allegiance to God.

Again, it is the same sense,—of God's living union with our humanity, which has ever relieved me of all fear and anxiety respecting the issues of enlarging knowledge, scientific or historical. *Here* is the dear and mighty God at home :—why dread any discoveries we may meet abroad? Day by day, from morn to night, under our roof-tree and out upon our fields, in the mind that thinks, in the heart that aspires,—in the nation that strives for the right, in the world that moves on its course, He lives with us and manifests himself through us, with every variety of good: and what old facts can we have to fear? Why petrify the past, when a present divineness is flowing by? Now that Raffalle *is dead* and can give us nothing more, it is certainly a loss to find

that a picture is not his ; but if his genius and pencil were immortal, if, hour by hour, we saw the figures grow and the pure colours spread beneath his touch, why should we wish to fasten on him a doubtful thing? One only care would then be ours, simply to let him have his own. And where there is a genuine repose of faith,—where we are not shut up in the idea of a transitory Revelation, once for all, whose title-deed is gone if a little ink should fade,—where we realise the breadth and continuity of Divine manifestation, we shall be of quiet eye to look for light, and of free joy to welcome it. The vanity of “progress” and the shrinking of “conservatism” are egotisms both, unworthy of disciples who should lose themselves, their fancies and their fears, in trust of God’s infinite realities. If an eagerness to learn and an openness to teach have exceeded in me the measure of your conscious wants, ascribe it, I entreat you, not to any disparagement of simple, contented, restful piety, but to irrepressible interest in all the lines of thought that converge upon the Holy of holies, and a jealous desire to preserve the accord between the fervors of Christian faith and the freshest lights of knowledge.

Moved by the same persuasion,—of God’s living union with our humanity,—I was early led, not only into abhorrence of the priestly character, but into an estimate perhaps too low of all disciplinarian methods for the administration of Churches, for the propagation of personal influence, and the voluntary

management of Christian men. Unless it were possible to go right down to the seats of inmost faith, and waken the conditions of God's spirit there, a certain shame has ever haunted me at resorting to subsidiary agencies, in the wielding of which I could find no support from inward conviction. Without appeal to deep affections, no real thing seemed to be done; and with it, the fruit would secretly ripen by night and day. 'Water the roots then, and let them grow.' Such has been my thought,—perhaps also my infirmity. I am far from recommending it to others, though alone possible to me. If I have erred in this, it has been from too much trust in others, too little in myself, from belief in the spirit alive in their hearts, and misgivings of its force in my own. How it is, I know not: but in private,—to this one and to that,—I could never talk of what is holiest, without an advance of sympathy that makes the talk all needless. Is it perhaps a sign of our organic union as social men, that true reverence can never speak above a whisper, unless it be *to multitudes*;—but *then*, can breathe its full tones, be they sorrowful or jubilant, and never doubt that they go home? Oh brothers all! what are we but of stammering lips and dumb, when taken one by one;—but, in communion, a chorus of solemn voices answering to the simplest sign; now mellowed to the music of humanity, now pealing to the glory of the Most High.

In the very nature of Religion, indeed, there is

something which makes it difficult to reduce to the economy of *Professional administration*: and almost in proportion as the difficulty seems conquered, the essence is fled. Its inspirations, like those of Poetry and Art, lie among the free affections which, even in the most faithful mind, assert their spontaneity and evade the methods and seasons of the will. It is the perfection of the Saints and of the Saviour to be always One with God, sincere in every sanctity, and to know not what it is to be faint and blind of heart. It is the guilt of trained routine to pretend and imitate all this, and *seem* to have the draught of life ready for every thirsting tongue. It is the sorrowful strife of imperfect men,—men that *will not* be actors and *cannot* be angels,—to miss no Divine occasion when God's light and truth are real, and simulate none that shall turn them into unreality. That problem I do not profess to have solved, except only on the negative side,—to the avoidance of insincerity and pretence. My shortcomings on the other side are too close to me for fitting speech, except in humbleness before “the Great Taskmaster.” This only will I say. No forbearance, human or Divine, —no patient friendship of yours, no sparing tenderness of God,—is lost upon a heart that lives on mercy and answers every trusting look.

But these lingering words must have an end. With sad affection I once more count and store the fruits of five-and-twenty years; then turn upon them the key of sacred memory, and depart. In person

and in home, a life enriched with precious friendships, chastened with some holy sorrows, but darkened by no shadows of estrangement: in public work, no associate but of like mind and genial heart, *one* loved and honoured beyond most living men, and *another* to whom it is a pure joy to leave my charge: in the Church, this fair and stately house of God, whence indeed many faithful have been called to a statelier above, but where still assembles a generation of no declining spirit; schools created for the Sunday, and vastly increased for every day, and wholesome throughout with vigorous and well-ordered work; classes for the young whose ranks were never better filled; the festival of Christian Communion warmed up by far ampler sympathies; a provision and stir of books for the studious eye, and of discussion for the enquiring mind; the traces everywhere of a people that accepts the brotherhood of Christian labour:—these are the blessings from which it might well seem to need an importunate summons of duty to call me away. Yet no outward elements of enlargement, were they ever so great, would at all answer my prayer for some vestige of benediction on these years. And far more than all beside would it be, if in that time but a few souls, one here and one there, were reborn into diviner faith and love and peace;—if, above all, I could think that any who have exchanged our communion for a better, and taken thither their ripe wisdom or their motherly self-sacrifice, or their maidenly docility, or their youthful fire,

may still feel the tones they caught with us not out of tune with the higher harmonies.

And now, dear Friends, the last word must come. It is human to wish not to be forgot. Yet, believe me, to be lost from your memory and die away by the dawn of what is higher is my inmost desire. Could I fear indeed that, hereafter, heedless change and fading reverence might betray you into lower mood; that instead of taking up the beauty of this place and the affluence of your opportunities as the simple organ of expression for your own piety, you might degrade them into a mechanism for "attraction," the rhetoric of a sect canvassing the world;—that not real inner worship for yourselves, but side persuasion to others, might here give the tone to the hours—then it would indeed be bitter to be *thus* forgot. But for the rest, the sooner and the further a greater and holier spirit snatches you away, and leaves these years enshadowed and traceless in the past, the intenser will be my joy that my work has reached its end, that I am poured out and lost on the offering of your faith, and that the sacrifice is accepted and complete. And so may the Lord perfect in you his Grace and Glory!

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On the Sunday after the Funeral

OF

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BY THE

REV. ROBERT ARIS WILLMOTT,

INCUMBENT.

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TO
MRS. WALTER,
OF
BEAR WOOD,

THIS SERMON

Is Inscribed,

BY

HER VERY SINCERE AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author regrets that indisposition, and absence from home, occasioned by it, should have obliged him to defer the publication of this Discourse. It was preached at the beautiful season of the year from which the illustrations are drawn: when the valleys stood thick with corn, and the sheaves were piled up to the church doors. He wishes it to be received as a humble, but sincere offering of regard towards the friend whom he has lost; in many respects a great, but whom it was the writer's privilege to know chiefly as a good man.

ST. CATHERINE'S,
November 4th, 1847.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HARVEST-HOME.

PSALM CXXVI. 7.

HE THAT NOW GOETH ON HIS WAY WEEPING, AND BEARETH
FORTH GOOD SEED, SHALL DOUBTLESS COME AGAIN WITH
JOY, AND BRING HIS SHEAVES WITH HIM.

THIS song of thankfulness was composed to celebrate the return of the Jews from Babylon, after the Lord had stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to release them from bondage*. They went out from the land of their captivity to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, bearing precious burdens of gold and silver. It was a joyful day to the exiles, when the proclamation of freedom resounded along that sumptuous empire. We see them rising up, "the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites†," setting out on their homeward pilgrimage, and asking their way to Sion, with their faces thitherward. But the triumph was

* Ezra i. 1.

† Ezra i. 5.

embittered by mournful reflections. Many of their brethren still sang the Lord's song in a strange land. These scattered people of his pasture they beseech God also to lead back, so that pouring in like floods over parched and thirsty regions, they might repeople the country, and put an end to the desolation of Judah. This is the meaning of the petition in the fifth verse—"Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the rivers in the south." The origin of the figure is found in the mountainous torrents of Idumæa, which, drying up in summer, are again replenished in the rainy season. The simile is not unfrequent in Holy Scripture: we hear Job comparing his brethren "to the stream of brooks," that "pass away;" "what time they wax warm, they vanish; when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place*." The point of resemblance is plain. The channel of the torrent is empty at one period of the year, and overflowing at another; so the land of the Hebrews, ruinous and uncultivated during the time of the captivity, was to look green and blossom like the rose, under the fostering influences of their happy restoration. The Lord had done great things for them already, whereof they rejoiced†. Having sown in

* Job vi. 15, 17.

† Psalm cxxvi. 4.

tears, they were to reap in joy; coming again with united and grateful hearts, and bringing their sheaves with them.

The general truth taught by the Psalmist is the loving-kindness of our Heavenly Father, in making a happy end out of a bad beginning; in changing the weariness of the night for the joy of the morning—the sackcloth for the wedding-garment. The consoling assurance is addressed to a people occupied in the fields; to what we call a rural population, familiar with ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, and gathering into barns. It is well to remember this circumstance in reading the Old and New Testament, because much of the beauty of scriptural imagery is derived from it. Our Lord's Parables, in particular, are richly coloured with agricultural allusions; he speaks of His own threshing-floor and the winnowing-fan of Judgment. His Apostles exhibit the same peculiarity; we find St. Paul telling the Corinthians, that they were "God's husbandry*," or cultivated field; and exhorting Timothy to shew himself a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth†;" where the word "dividing" is borrowed from the toil of the hus-

* 1 Cor. iii. 9.

† 2 Tim. ii. 15.

bandman, drawing his furrow even, and turning up the earth in a straight line.

The comparison, therefore, of a good man's close of life to a harvest-home, when "the garner is full, and plenteous with all manner of store," you will perceive at once to be very significant. It is a picture to the understanding. It speaks with almost as clear and persuasive a voice to you, with whom it is "wheat-harvest to-day." Wherever we turn our eyes, the goodness of the Divine Husbandman breaks upon us, from unnumbered corn-fields, that brighten and darken as the shadowy wind brushes them. Every corner of our village is "filled with the fruit of His works." There seems to be more religion in the wheat-field, than in the meadow or the wood. The Gospel consecrates by using it. It might be a blessing to your hearts to remember, as you "go out to your work and to your labour until the evening," in these long and sunshiny days, how eighteen hundred years ago the footsteps of your Saviour rustled among the corn of Galilee; how He taught His disciples from a few ears rubbed in the hand; and how His own called Apostle employed the sowing and growth of wheat, to represent the burial and resurrection of the body.

But upon this afternoon, the path of duty, not more than of affection, leads me from the general view of the text, to a particular and personal application of it. This darkened Church reminds you of one who went on his way weeping, bearing forth good seed, and who has now, we trust, by the helping-staff of the Good Shepherd reached a joyfuller harvest-home, and carried fruitfuller sheaves with him.

There is an affecting contrast between the season of our friend's departure from us, and of his return. The last time that he knelt in this house of God, was on the morning of his Lord's nativity—Christmas Day. Since then you have not seen him. He went from us, when "the hoar frost" was scattered over the trees "like ashes," and the snow rose to a level with the hedge; he comes back to us, when there is "an heap of corn high upon the hills*," and the little valleys are soft with the drops of rain†. Seven long months of winter, and spring, and summer time! But in the dark and dreary weather, a mighty work was going on in your fields and his heart. What beautiful examples of natural and spiritual husbandry and growth! How the plough was moving! How the ground was mellowing! How

* Psalm Lxxii. 16.

† Psalm Lxv. 11.

the seed was quickening! How the sun was shining! How the dew was falling! How the blade was growing! How the ear was ripening! In his breast as in your fields, dwelt a vigorous principle of fertility. The soil had a heart in it. The Baptismal seed had come up in abundant clusters; although not always healthful, nor of the finest flavour. Some red flowers spotted the corn. In him, as in all of us, were to be traced worldly hopes and desires, sickly and perishing, as the "grass growing upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it be plucked up; whereof the mower filleth not his hand, neither he that bindeth up the sheaves his bosom*." I do not stand here to canonize our departed friend in a funeral sermon. He felt, as every true and faithful follower of Jesus Christ feels, the reproachful weight of his own short-comings, and bewailed them. They grew larger as his eye of faith became stronger. Accordingly, he welcomed the visitation that tried him. He saw in it the flame to scorch up the rank under-growth, and let in sunshine upon the harvest. A day of purifying affliction was needed by God's child; and his loving Father kept His promise; He sent it.

* Psalm cxxix. 6, 7.

The healing medicine cleansed as it burned. The weeds shrivelled, the atmosphere brightened, the day-spring broke out; and spiritual bloom, and freshness, and light dawned over the suffering servant, whom the Great Physician had come to visit and cure. So it came to pass, that when He, who "openeth His hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness," was renewing the face of the earth*, and sprinkling the paths to your farms and cottages with early green; a sweeter spring had already smiled on the chamber of him, who travelled on his way shedding Christian tears, and bearing forth good seed. And when the winter was over and gone, the flowers appeared on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds was come†, to the fields, and woods, and gardens he loved so well, and beheld no longer:—at that time, like a tree planted by the water-side, he was putting out leaves that should never wither, bringing forth more fruit in his age‡; making continual melody in his heart; and compassed "about with songs of deliverance§."

You cannot fail to observe the reference to this vegetation of holy thoughts in the remark-

* Psalm civ. 30.

† Song of Solomon ii. 11, 12.

‡ Psalm xcii. 13.

§ Psalm xxxii. 8.

able image of the Prophet, who describes the Sun of Righteousness rising with "healing on his wings." You have constant opportunities of witnessing the effects of the natural sun upon the grass, the flowers, the corn, and the trees. The Holy Ghost has similar operations. He conveys the blood of Jesus Christ into the faint and torpid soul of the believer, melting the frost and waking the benumbed thoughts and feelings into life and fragrance. The flowers in our gardens look fair and lovely only in the light shining over them; so the thoughts, and words, and actions of the Christian become bright and glorious in the reflected righteousness of the true Sun, who never goeth down. They seem and are accounted holy in the sight of God; or in the words of St. Peter*, they become "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

I have told you that our friend welcomed his sickness. He took it to his heart, with a close and loving embrace. No exclamation was oftener on his lips than the pathetic confession of the Psalmist:—"I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled†." His prayer was:—"O remember not the sins and offences of

* 1 Pet. ii. 5.

† Psalm cxix. 75.

my youth, but according to thy mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness*.” He had the fullest and most reverential sense of the omnipotence of the Cross. He lived under it. His eye did not willingly turn from the countenance of his Redēemer, made present by faith and prayer. He had unceasing yearnings after clearer revelations. He took up the petition of the Singer of Israel: “O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling†.” It seemed to me, and to those who had the privilege of talking with him, that he brought to his great task of Christian preparation the temper our Lord required in His disciples—that of a little child. He asked to be taught of God, and God did teach him, as He has promised: “Them that are meek shall he guide in judgment, and such as are gentle, them shall he learn his way‡.” He refreshed him with the word of grace, which is “sweeter than honey, and the honey-comb§,” and made him to hear of joy and gladness, so that the bones which He had broken might rejoice||. All who beheld him lifting up “his hands as an evening sacrifice¶,” were edified by

* Psalm xxv. 6.

† Psalm xliii. 3.

‡ Psalm xxv. 8.

§ Psalm xix. 10.

|| Psalm li. 8.

¶ Psalm cxli. 2.

the unaffected earnestness of his devotion. He strove to give himself up entirely to God's service. In the largest signification of the phrase, he shut out the world. Whatever interest he manifested in its concerns, had a reference to those whom he loved and was leaving. Several weeks before his death, he knew that he had done with it; that from him its "fashion" was passing away. He resembled a person embarked on a voyage to a distant country, and meeting, at intervals, with ships going home. What freights or passengers they carry, affect him not; he employs them to send back letters and kind messages to his friends. This was the feeling of the Christian whom we lament. He was outward-bound. His thoughts rested with anxious, but humble curiosity, upon the kingdom and people he was soon to live among. If a shade darkened his path, it fell from the clouds that seemed occasionally to obscure the lustre of the Divine Presence. This interchange of gloom with sunshine is one of the commonest characteristics of the religious life. But he felt the affectionate desire to have the light of God's countenance always lifted up. As he drew nearer to the strange land whither he journeyed, this wish and prayer increased in ardour. Like

the becalmed mariner he looked up to the sails,—“O that the wind would blow.” And his supplicating eye was seen. That mighty rushing wind, which shook the upper room in Jerusalem, descended upon him. It blew as it is wont, softly; now dying away, and now reviving; yet ever wafting over the troubled sea breathings of paradise and music of angels. One apprehension lay heavy at his heart; whether his faith possessed energy enough to bear the additional burdens which God might lay upon him. When the sickness deepened in pain and weariness, he feared lest he should be unable to bear his cross. But this doubt passed away. He prayed to the Apostle’s Lord, and received the Apostle’s answer: “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness*.” As his day was, so was his power. He had not yet entered the still waters; the ship was to endure the buffeting of the tempest, and to be tossed by the waves, before there was a great calm, and he himself knew by experience what a “rest is reserved for the people of God,” when the Ruler of the sea “maketh the storm to cease,” and they are brought “unto the haven where they would be†.”

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

† Psalm cvii. 30.

My Brethren! this sick chamber of our friend teaches us all a solemn lesson. It is one not willingly learned; men turn aside from pain, adversity, and grief. This toilsome husbandry offends them. They will not sow in tears to reap in joy. They shrink from bearing forth good seed weeping, that they may come again bringing sheaves. They put their hand to the plough, and look back.

Now you may be helped to banish or deaden this temptation, by remembering that affliction, borne by the Christian in a lowly and trusting spirit, draws him closer to Him who sends it. Upon earth, it is the suffering child who is seen oftenest at the father's knee, or in the mother's arms. Apply this illustration to God's family, into which you have been adopted by baptism: His poorest, saddest children are most under His guiding eye. Think of Dives putting on his purple, and the dogs licking the sores of Lazarus—God's eye was bent on both, but oh, if we may dare to say so, with how different an expression. And this privilege and blessing of grief, received from God and endured for Him, are not confined to the present existence. They embrace the future. Consider by what image of tenderness, the mercy of our Heavenly

Father is represented in the new kingdom of his love, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*." The mourner then shall rejoice in his crown and his harvest; but what shall be done for the eye that never wept? Therefore it is that the Saints of God, in all ages of His dispensations, have, like St. Paul to the Philippians, counted everything but loss, that they might learn not only the power of their Lord's crucifixion, but the fellowship of His sufferings; and with St. Peter, have determined to rejoice, inasmuch as they are partakers of Christ's sufferings; being fully assured that every grief and trial endured for His sake and in His name, are waves to bear them nearer to the green shores of Canaan; that every tear of holy resignation becomes a herald of joy; and that the baptism of sorrow, poured over them beneath the Cross of the Saviour, admits them into the covenant of peace.

This is neither the time nor the place to contemplate him whom we have lost, under those relations of active life, in which he stood so long and bravely forward in the eyes of the world; but one feature of his public and secular character is bound up with his religious history,

* Rev. xxi. 4.

and inseparable from it—I speak of his unceasing advocacy of the poor, and all who are “desolate and oppressed.” Into this cause he cast himself with the impetuous zeal and patient industry of his generous nature. For years he hoped against hope. It has been truly as nobly said, that time reserved his triumph; that the verdict of England reached him in the chamber of death, and that he died with the news of victory in his ear. The martial image represents the nature of the struggle in which he had been engaged; it was a war where hearts bled. He found a dark fortress of ungodliness, garrisoned by the baser passions and appetites, setting at nought the royalty and laws of the Gospel, and defending themselves with the fierce audacity of rebellion. He took up his position at the gate. Through a long and dismal season of tyranny, his descending axe gave the only sound of assault. Year by year the ramparts crumbled, and he fell as the flag was torn down from the citadel. The truth is spoken in an allegory, but it is not exaggerated. We read of missionaries of religion, but he was the Apostle of Charity.

Eloquent men have stirred our hearts by portraits of heroes dying on the field, or castle

walls, and wrapped in the colours their own blood had bathed. And the glowing eye of imagination brings up no spectacle more affecting, than the wounded warrior, raising himself from the ground to take a last look at the battle, to mark the retreating columns of the enemy, and catch, with his closing ear, the shout of triumph borne upon the wind. The pathos of the scene is deepened, when the career of the officer had been the sport of evil tongues and evil times. With the glory of his country, rises a feeling of his own brightened name. It was so with the beloved soldier of humanity, whose memory we are now assembled to honour. The victory alone did not cheer him. He read in it the assurance that his country will do him justice at last; that the great principle, for which he had lived, and fought, and suffered, was impregnated with a new life and fruitfulness; that the standard of mercy he had raised, would advance conquering and to conquer; that absent in body, he should be present in spirit; and that being dead, he yet should speak.

Yes! he died with the news of victory in his ear; one note, indeed, might have swelled into that trumpet-peal. Would that he had lived long enough, to know, that he who inhe-

rited his name, was immediately to catch his mantle; being led forward by the almost visible hand of Providence, into that field of holy labour and Christian patriotism, from which, bearing forth good seed, and followed by the prayers of good men, we hope to see him come again in God's due time, blessed by fruits of religious and wise husbandry; and, even from the barren harvest-field of this present life, bringing many sheaves with him.

But with him, around whom our serious and loving thoughts linger to-day, earthly scenes and struggles are over. He reposes after the battle. And God, having been "pleased to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother, we have committed his body to the ground." His country might have celebrated his high deeds with a more splendid funeral; and if the destitute whom he helped, or the sick whom he comforted, had been gathered round his pall, the eye would not have missed the listening balcony, or the drooping banner, or the muffled drum, or the blaze of arms along the swarming streets. To him that tribute would have been as a tale that is told. The august Cathedral tempted him not. He desired to lay his head beneath the shadow of that humbler and dearer Church, by

which his name will be kept alive among your children's children, after the grass is growing over him who speaks, and you who listen.

He shared the sentiment of the illustrious English Statesman, whom most he delighted to reverence*. He, when the glories of Westminster Abbey were lifted to his gaze, preferred to sleep in the southern corner of a country churchyard, and mingle his dust with the ashes of his kindred. He thought the name of the family burial-ground, tender and soothing. Here, then, we have laid our friend, to await the call of the last trumpet. It was a solemn hour, not to be forgotten, when the Church Militant restored her weary child into the embrace of the Church Triumphant. Living in the fear of God, the Father, dying in the faith of God, the Son, departing in the company of God, the Holy Ghost,—we have given his body, the temple of his flesh, to crumble away in our sacred earth. Let time and decay do their work! Let the broad front of intellect, and the swelling heart of charity moulder together. Not one stone of the temple must remain upon another. But you are not to think of him as imprisoned and barred up in that sepulchre in our garden.

* Mr. Burke.

The shrine is overthrown; but the power that inhabited it is uninjured. His ashes, his mortality, lie hidden under that stone. But he,—the man, the Christian, the child of God—he is not there. All the kings upon earth, with all their armies, could not shut the doors against him. He would walk out from the tomb, with no stain of death upon his garment, like the consecrated witnesses from the furnace of Babylon. No hand can hold a departing spirit. You might as well think of taking a man captive, by cutting down the hedge, where the sun throws his flying shadow. His sepulchre is among us; but our friend is not in it. Somewhere,—in some place,—at this very moment, he lives, and moves, and has his being. In a new kingdom, among a new people, under new laws, and with a new organization. That vigorous mind, which knew no rest but in motion, is employed. Perhaps it obtains glimpses of wider love and benevolence, than were ever unfolded to its gaze in this world.

O think not, I beseech you, that the joy communicated to the believer's heart by the Holy Ghost, in this life, ceases or is put to death in the passage to the next. The spiritual eye does not close with the natural. The life, which

is hid with Christ, undergoes no convulsion or pause. Its animation is not suspended. The soul of him who dies in the Lord is in heaven when it departs; not within the blaze of the emerald throne—not in the full ecstasy of blessedness and glory—but in the intermediate and preparative state of happiness; in that Paradise, where the Saviour promised to receive the penitent thief, and where the light streams with a fainter beauty, from the remote walls of the New Jerusalem, which are built of jasper and chrysolite.

My brethren! I press home this middle condition, between death and judgment, to your hearts and consciences. It is a common saying when persons die, after severe sufferings—"a happy release." But dissolution is often only a release, in the sense of a prisoner taken from his dungeon to execution. He exchanges one grief for another fearfully deeper. The voice from Heaven bade the beloved Disciple write—"Blessed are the dead WHICH DIE IN THE LORD*."

Think over in your minds, as you sit on those benches, all your relations, or friends, or acquaintances, who have passed away to judg-

* Rev. xiv. 13.

ment, since you were children. You know in what manner they lived, while they had their conversation among men. How have they been occupied since they awoke up in another existence? Some were loiterers about the highways of life—never ploughing, nor sowing, nor reaping. What have they been doing? Some were enemies of Jesus Christ, crucifying their Lord afresh, and putting Him to open shame. What have they been doing? Some, doubtless, were faithful servants of their Master, employing their talents, trimming their lamps, working in the vineyard. What have they been doing? What are they doing now? How do they look? What is the fashion of their countenance? What their language? What their consolations?

You can recall the old familiar faces; you can remember how they talked, and loved, and blessed you while upon earth. But you are not able to bring up them. O wonderful travellers! What scenes of amazing novelty and change have dazzled their eyes, since the beloved features of father and sister, and husband and wife darkened and went out! We should think much of a journey to that Antioch, where the followers of our Lord were first called Christians; or to that Damascus, whither St. Paul travelled, when

the voice of Jesus Christ summoned him from the tempest. But the dead! How vast their wanderings! What green or desolate tracts of country, gardens or wildernesses have they trodden, under the guard of good or evil angels! If one of the departed could return to this Church, starting up suddenly in the midst of you, and relate what he had seen and felt of blessing and cursing, of God or devil, since his last earthly recollection faded;—how swiftly would all your worldly thoughts be swallowed up and lost in astonishment and fear. But a circumstance most vehemently pressing and chaining your minds, would be the connexion between what the buried did here, and what they are doing there; between their life upon earth, and the life they are now leading in an intermediate state. This is the alarming truth, which the melancholy associations of this day ought to imprint on your hearts. It is the great, the solemn, lesson I am seeking and praying to convey. It is the admonition which he, who is gone, most desired to be urged. I might tell you of the many tender thoughts in which you had a share; of the generous plans, for the relief of the poor and sick, that engaged our benefactor, during some little seasons of

hope and bodily amendment. I leave them out, and run my pen over them. God who reads the heart, knew whether those thoughts would have blossomed and borne fruit. If so; He has reckoned the desires for the deeds, and bound them up with the sheaves which His servant carried with him. I should expect to see the face of our beloved friend confronting me with a sad and reproachful expression, if I did not implore you, by every argument and appeal in my power, to be diligent in religious husbandry and dying preparation. The longer you live, the more corn will be required. If the reapers descend from heaven to-night, your sheaves will be reckoned up to-night; if to-morrow, they will be counted up to-morrow.

And be not cast down by this hard saying. If angels are to be your reapers, they are also your guardians. They are with you in the heat and burden of the toil. Let not your hearts be sorrowful. The sun shall not burn you by day, neither the moon by night. In heaven prayer is offered for you: the Advocate, who stands on the right hand of the Father, is the Man Christ Jesus, the great High Priest, who can "be touched with a feeling of our infirmities," because "he was in all points tempted like as we

are, yet without sin*.” The Saviour carried His human nature into heaven. The dew of tenderness that dimmed His divine eyes in the village of Bethany, clouds them over in the palace of His glory. He comes also to be our Judge—comes with all the recollections of His perfect manhood upon earth, and all the power of His unclouded Godhead in heaven. Blessed consolation! Sinner! wounded and bleeding in the hard ways of iniquity, cast thyself at the feet of the Good Shepherd, waiting to carry thee to His fold. Penitent! humbled by guilt, grasp the hem of His garment, and be healed. Good servant! faint in well doing, look up to the Eternal Mediator, who beckons thee to the Well of Life, that thou mayest be refreshed. For each and all the tears of the Redeemer flowed. Jesus of Nazareth passes by: Oh, hasten—call to Him—beseech Him to have mercy on you, before He is out of sight, or your eye of faith is too dark to behold Him.

You remember that when Moses and Elias appeared with our Lord, upon the Mount of Transfiguration, they talked with Him of His death. They spoke of dying, when He seemed to be arrayed in the robes of His kingdom. So

* Heb. iv. 15.

let it be with us. We will talk of our death in the midst of our life. You know not how or when there may be a knocking at the door. It may be opened by the golden key of a mild and preparing disease; or hewn down by the fierce battery of a sudden death; or consumed by the flames of an impetuous fever. Oh! work while it is day! Plough, that you may sow; sow, that you may reap; reap, that you may have sheaves bound for the garner; so that when the Lord of the harvest "shall appear," ye "also may appear with Him in glory*."

What a Harvest-Home that will be, when from all the fields of the world Christ's husbandmen shall come together! Every churchyard is a harvest-field, and every grave a sheaf of corn, or a bundle of tares. Both shall be gathered and bound; one for the garner, the other for the fire. Not an ear or a blade forgotten. It may be and must be comforting to believe that the chain of family affection shall never be divided, even in death. Sitting round the same hearth, and sleeping side by side in the burial-ground of peace—the graves of a household. Thus have we brought our dear fellow-labourer, like a shock of corn fully ripe, and laid him with those whom he loved.

* Coloss. iii. 4.

But it matters nothing in what region of the globe, the temple of our mortal flesh may be struck and blown over by the tempest of death. The eye of Him, whose we are, and to whom we go, embraces at the same instant all the sepulchres of the world, from the beginning to the end of time. He sees our little row of village tombs, green with English grass, where the children stop in their sunny play; and the heap of earth where the missionary sleeps under the Indian palm. The Friend of Lazarus watches all. They are temples of the Holy Ghost,—desolate, plundered, and decayed. But every one shall be rebuilt. Not slowly and painfully in the struggles and storms of temptation and sin; but in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the trump; when the angel shall “cry with a loud voice” to him “like unto the Son of Man,” sitting on a white cloud—“Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe*.”

My brethren! may God strengthen you in your sacred tillage; may Jesus Christ, the Divine Husbandman, go out with you, bearing forth good seed; may He send another Comforter to uphold you in all the chances and

* Rev. xiv. 15.

“changes of this transitory life;” as you journey along “being in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity;” until He brings you to His everlasting granaries, and your sheaves of holy works, done in His name, with you.

13
GENERAL HAVELOCK

AND

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERSHIP.

BY THE

REV. FREDERICK S. WILLIAMS,

BIRKENHEAD.

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

The Way to the Cross. Fifteenth Thousand.

A Christian Profession.

The Mission Congregationalism. Fifth Thousand.

GENERAL HAVELOCK AND CHRISTIAN SOLDIERSHIP.

SOME eight month have passed away since there flashed forth upon a hundred dials the telegraphic announcement, that the fairest and costliest jewel was falling from the crown of England. India, with its strange history, once colonized by a company of traders, now the noblest appendage ever held by state or potentate, and the richest dominion on the globe; India, so vast in its resources, so mighty in its influence, the possession of which had brought to this country so much power and prestige, the loss of which would have reduced her at one fell swoop in the scale of nations, was in arms against the crown and rule of England. Taken by the sword, she had taken the sword. The tidings awoke universal anxiety. Their novelty startled; the atrocities they recounted enraged. Some at once desponded, and declared that the sceptre of the East was dross; others looked hopefully for the immediate suppression of revolt, and predicted that the flames of rebellion could soon be trodden out or quenched in blood; all waited with solicitude the arrival of fresh intelligence, and, when it came, read or heard it with bated breath. But if the fears of alarmists were not fulfilled, neither were the hopes of the sanguine. The mutiny had spread, anarchy was rife, regiment after regiment had murdered its officers in cold blood, and then gathered to the standard of revolt; twenty, thirty, forty thousand men, fed with our food, armed with our arms, disciplined with our discipline, were in fierce array; Delhi, the ancient capital of the Moguls, was the head-quarters of the mutineers; Calcutta was in danger. Darkly gathered the clouds over the land, and as the flames of rebellion found dry and rotten fuel on every hand, they spread near and afar, and lighted up the heavens with their lurid, ghastly hue.

England gathered up her strength. Thirty vessels shook their canvass to the breeze, and borne upon the wings of the wind the van of the avenging host left her shores, and soon more than forty thousand men were hastening to the seat of war. But while the brow of England darkened at a peril so imminent, while her blood grew hot at the atrocities perpetrated against her

James H. H. H.

sons and daughters, which made her doubt whether they had not been enacted by fiends who, in some fell hour, had flung back the portals of perdition, and broken loose from hell, forth-with her strong right arm flashed the falchion from its sheath, and held high the sword of justice glittering in the light of heaven, not to be held in vain. Meanwhile tidings reached her of the deeds of heroism, of the martyr-like devotion of her children in that fearful strife. Every Englishman in India seemed to be a hero. But the highest officers to whom she confided the guidance of her forces fell one by one in that unequal struggle. Anson, Barnard, Henry Lawrence, "the fiery Neill," "the polite Nicholson," were overborne by death or disease; and then was heard again and yet again the name and deeds of one, of whom we have to make especial reference to-night.

Henry Havelock was born at Bishopwearmouth, on the 5th of April, 1795, the son of a prosperous ship owner. As a boy he was sent to the Charterhouse School, but his father's circumstances becoming embarrassed the lad was removed from school and he entered the Middle Temple. But from the study of law under Chitty, he passed, like the Overtons and Iretons of other days, to the profession of arms. His father's difficulties having compelled him to alienate the family seat of Ingress Hall, the son was never able to purchase a single step as a regimental officer, and having no connections in the regions of patronage, he had to trust simply to merit, and to the appreciation of those merits by his superiors for advance. After eight years of home quarters he exchanged into an Indian regiment, and at once took part in the Burmese war, and from that time his service was constant and conspicuous. He was engaged in the first and second Affghan campaigns, and was one of the few who passed through them with "added reputation;" afterwards in the Punjab war and the Persian. On the conclusion of peace with Persia he returned to India, was wrecked off Ceylon in April last, on his voyage to Calcutta; and scarcely had he reached the capital when tidings were received of the outbreak at Meerut and Delhi, and the command of a moveable column was entrusted to him with which to operate against one of the most consummate miscreants that ever cursed the earth he treads. You know the rest. His eight pitched battles in two months against overwhelming odds, in which victory seemed chained to his standards, and his crowning achievements at Lucknow, are all too recent and too familiar to need recounting here. But though upon the battle-field missiles of death seemed to turn aside from him, exhaustion, exposure, and anxiety did their work, and Henry

Havelock laid his life upon the altar of his country on the 25th of November last, at Alumbagh. "Know ye not that there is . . . a great man fallen this day in Israel."

I. WARFARE.—Would you see the soldier in the field? Visit yonder plains of India. The little army is advancing. Its purpose is to relieve a beleagured garrison. The men press on their weary way. The guns creak heavily upon the rutty roads. But to conquer or to die, is writ upon the countenances of officers and men. The "slight, spare figure" of the general—for he is but five feet five in height, and looks as if a week's exposure would break him down—the grave look, the emaciated face, the almost unobservant apathetic expression, excites little to awaken admiration or reverence; but the steel is burnished, and the blade is keen, that rests within that seemingly frail scabbard. The boy whose gravity awoke the playful sallies of his schoofellows at the Charterhouse, has passed into a quiet, calm, undemonstrative man; yet one of deep conscientiousness, profound feeling, and iron tenacity of purpose. But the moment for action comes. An aide-de-camp arrives at the gallop with tidings that the enemy is posted in force in front—that in deep, dark masses he crests the ridge and occupies the village, making each house a fortress garrisoned; and that the roads are commanded with heavy guns. Now you shall see the man—the mind. The sword leaps from its scabbard. The eagle eye scans each position. Instinctively the general assumes the air and bearing of command; instinctively all obey. He has never lost a battle yet, and the men are sure he never will. He grows quite chatty and agreeable as the shot whistles, for the guns of the enemy have found the range and are well plied. The plan of attack is swiftly conceived. Skirmishers are thrown out in front, and aides-de-camp bear their instructions to the officers. Now for a moment that little army pauses, like some eagle poised upon the wing, and then with lightning swiftness it swoops upon the quarry, tosses resistance to the winds, and nestles sternly, with blood-stained bosom, upon the heights from which it has hurled, or on which slain, the recreant foe.

The work accomplished, the general relapses to his former quietude; the flame before so beacon-like, must not be frittered away in needless excitement; and sinking and slumbering amid the embers is gathered up for future, and perhaps early use.

II. VICTORY.—We might tell how the prowess of the soldier, and the tactics of the general, and the valour of the troops were

uniformly rewarded with success; but we will now pass from victories mortal to victories moral. Henry Havelock enlisted in two armies: a carnal and a spiritual. He served under two sovereigns: the Queen of England and the King of kings. He fought in two campaigns: against the foes of England, and against the world, the flesh, and the devil.—It has been remarked by those who have visited the church-yard and the field of Waterloo, that there is hardly one epitaph which breathes over the departed any hope of a resurrection—hopeful as epitaphs generally are; but the graves of the Crimea tell a different tale. “It was the fashion, too,” as the Bishop of London remarked a few days since, “for some persons to scoff at the idea of psalm-singing soldiers, but there has come the day when men now see what psalm-singing soldiers can do.” “Like most of our Indian statesmen and soldiers, the Lawrences, Edwardes, Nicholson, Montgomery, and many others, Henry Havelock was a Christian of the old stamp—a strong God-fearing Puritan man, who thought often in Scriptural phrases, and deemed it no shame to teach his soldiers to pray.” In 1827, Henry Havelock had married the daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Marshman, the renowned Baptist Missionary, at Serampore; and he was a member of the Baptist church in London, under the pastorate of the Rev. William Brock. “Turn out the saints,” said Lord Gough on one occasion, when he anticipated desperate work, “Havelock never blunders, and his men are never drunk.”

The homage paid to the sincerity of his piety is universal. “He was animated,” says one, “by the highest and holiest feelings. Like the stern warriors of Cromwell, he marched on with a purpose.” “He was truly,” says a second, “one of God’s soldiers; and the consciousness that he had done his duty to the utmost of his power, that he had made the most of his talent, was enough for him.” “The names,” says a third, “which become household words in men’s mouths, are those which they associate at once with moral greatness and with intellectual power. While many heroes, whose exploits have been on a much larger scale, have become mere assemblages of syllables upon the page of history, General Havelock, like a far inferior man, Colonel Gardiner, will be reverently spoken of as a type of the Christian soldier.” “He has awed and captivated,” says a fourth, “a flippant and frivolous world into recognition of the transcendent merits of a true Puritan soldier. He has shown how a real, living, daily-nurtured fear of God, may, like the aloe, when its proper season comes, flower in a rich cluster of glorious deeds. Under a *regime* of dexterity, superficiality, and clever

pretence, he has so vividly demonstrated the superiority of simplicity, depth, and modest truthfulness of character, as to place them in the most suggestive contrast." Another confesses that, though they have no sympathy with "the Puritanic type of religion," it must be admitted that men like Havelock are the ones to win England's victories; proving, as they do, that he who fears God the most fears man the least. "But the grand characteristic of Havelock was the deep religious feeling and conviction which animated and directed all his thoughts, emotions, and actions. Religion was the basis of his character: all his principles were rooted in it—all his actions emanated from it. There was as little of display in his discharge of religious duties as his other actions, but there was an utter absence of concealment. 'Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth spoke;' and by him every action was conceived to be an expression of devotion to his God. His life may truly be said to have been one long hymn of praise to his Creator. Every one who came into contact with Havelock felt that he was sincere; and even those least accessible to devotional sentiment, sympathised with and revered it in him. Havelock's earnest, incessant desire, like St. Paul's, was that all men might be not only almost, but altogether, such as he was; and yet no one was ever known to be offended in him with what might have been deemed importunity in others. It was felt to be simply the overflow of the redundant benevolence and earnestness of a mind ever possessed by the idea of Deity. Such was the man who for a few months back has held nations watching his rapid career with breathless interest." Happy for him that through so many years he could say that which another Christian soldier could only say in the evening of life:—

"When in my youth, I loved to shed my blood,
Both for my king and for my country's good,
But in my age my joy it was to be
Soldier to Him who shed His blood for me."

"Know ye not that there is . . . a great man fallen this day in Israel?"

III. REWARD.—After thirty-four years of service in the swamps of Burmah, in the plains of India, among the passes of Cabul, upon the sandy shores of Persia—after suffering from fever, and enduring shipwreck, the veteran soldier, though known to his comrades as a reliable and excellent officer, had achieved no high distinction. But the life which had been somewhat troubled and fickle in its morning, and calm in its

noon, was destined to a glorious evening. True, the highest officers of state doled out their niggard instalment of reward with reluctance, and haggled with men of larger heart, but England took up the matter—I had almost said the quarrel—and, on the 26th of November, it was announced that the baronetcy had been conferred. But, as though in bitter mockery of the delay, death had done its work; and the ink was not dry upon the parchment which recorded the decision, when Henry Havelock lay a corpse. He is now beyond our reward. Our eye, indeed, may kindle with enthusiasm, till it is dimmed with the tear of gratitude, as the lip tells the deeds of the departed; our hands may lovingly fill the cenotaph of the hero, our hearts may resolve that his memory shall be ever fragrant and never forgotten; but he is beyond our recompense. England's Queen might fain welcome him to her palace halls, and be honoured in doing him honour; every cottage in this land would gladly fling its door the widest, and bid him welcome to its hearth, while old men called him "Son," and young ones, "Brother." Could his weight in gold ten times told—could the creation of a dozen peerages—could the renunciation of a province, bring him back to earth and life, it were gladly paid by millions, that England's noblest daughters might twine their fairest garland for that honoured brow, and fasten to his breast the glittering ensigns, while the state—shameful of its tardiness—brought forth the coronet and its entwining strawberry leaf. But it is now too late. England can only mourn the memory of her son—can gather up his precious dust, and stoop, with tears of tenderness, to write his epitaph. We grieve, however, not for him, but for ourselves:

"When such friends part, 'tis the survivor dies."

And while England chides herself in sorrow that she had not earlier woven for him the garland, he has twined laurels for her, and left them, with his dying hand, a precious legacy.

But if man were neglectful, God was true. "He that honoureth me," he has said, "I will honour." As a soldier of England, winning her victories, he has had no recompense: as a soldier of Christ, he has gone to his reward. We saw only the outer life and the human as it lay down to die; but when he passed from earthly view, the mortal quietly put on its immortality and stole away to God, and entered into rest. We now can only wreath the cypress; but Christ has wreathed the amaranth.

And is there no analogy between that soldier life and ours?

Rather is it not all analogy? Is not life a *warfare*? Are there not alien forces of truth and error, of right and wrong, of God and Satan, struggling for the mastery? Hath not each army its leader and monarch? Has not the Christian a Captain of his salvation? and is there not a prince of the power of the air? Yes, over the realms of sin there reigns no mere unembodied essence floating through the vacancy of air, but a presiding mind. There is a rebel angel at large in the universe, profound in purpose, skilful in manoeuvre, dauntless in enterprise, swift in execution, who gathers his legionary host with hatred against the best interests of man—subtle, deadly, and implacable. Hence the sweep and onset of temptation, in all its manifold inventiveness. It pervades us, haunts us, follows us, floats across our path, whispers at our hearts, goading and alluring. It is the pestilence that walketh in darkness. It is the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” True, temptation is not sin. However seductive its blandishments, and however fierce its assaults, still it need not become sin to you; it does not, unless you consent. That thought of evil may hover over your spirit, and with its broad wings hide from you the pure light of God; but if you do not bid it welcome—if you bear its blandishments only to answer with a stern “Get thee behind me, Satan,” it is not sin. It has assailed the stronghold of your being with its deadliest hate. But if you parley not with it, and give it no consent; if the garrison be true to its allegiance, the citadel is safe.

But for this purpose be watchful and trustful, that in your labour and your leisure, in the fortress and in the field, you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The world is an encampment, life a battle, and you a soldier. Take unto you the whole armour of God. Be no carpet knight. Shun the cloistered retreat, and the curtained, cushioned ease. If you love music, let it not be voluptuous, but martial. Remember that you fight not for ribbons and for tinsel, but for hearth and altar—for heaven and God.

But if your temptation be thus ceaseless, and yours be thus a Christian life, life must have daily *victories*—victories over self, and selfishness, and sin—over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Is it so with you, or are you oftener vanquished? Have you sometimes to transpose the passage,—“This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith?”—and appropriating it for yourself, confess,—“This is the

victory overcoming our faith, even the world." When the hot struggle of temptation's hour is passed, dare you exult with the humble but glorious joy of victory? And though your helmet be dinted with many blows, and your sword have parried many thrusts, are you patient in endurance, and earnest in battle? If so, "Blessed is he that endureth temptation, for when he is *proved* he shall have the crown of life."

The *reward* of the Christian soldier is assured. It is to-day in the consciousness of duty discharged, in strength of character, ever growing; it shall be hereafter in the "well done" of the Captain of our Salvation, and the full fruition of those joys which He has promised to the "faithful unto death."

If such then be the solemn and sublime enterprise of life let us fulfil it. Did the Crusaders of other days gather from every land of Christendom upon the tented fields of Palestine, fired with the purpose to snatch the Holy Land from the grasp of infidels, and to give it again to holy men; were their hearts nerved for the arduous task as they gazed upon the sacred emblem of the cross, and the motto emblazoned upon helm and breast: "By this sign I conquer?" Shall the cross be less precious in your esteem? Shall their ardour to give a land to Christians outstrip yours to give a world to Christ?—Do you in the fields of earthly strife to-day find the soldiers gathering closest round their standards, and that where uprise those blackened, tattered shreds of silk, emblems of many a victory past, and pledges of many a victory to come, there the battle rages the fiercest, and the musketry rolls the deadliest, and the bayonets flash the bloodiest? And shall the Christian soldier be less valiant upon the battle-field of earth, and hold the standards of the cross, the uplifted cross itself under which he fights, in less sacred keeping?

Then, soldiers of Christ, to arms! Hear the cry from near and from afar, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Answer with your deeds as well as words. Not in strength of yours, but with this as your watch-word: "If God be for us, who can be against us!" with this as your war-cry: "The battle is not ours, but God's!" with this as your conviction: that "he must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet!"

Soldiers of Christ, to arms! Did a great general of modern days inflame the martial ardour of his troops when, on the sands of Egypt, he pointed to the pyramids, and said, "Forty centuries look down upon you?" But of your fidelity there is a cloud of witnesses, not the stony monuments, or the dumb centuries, but a cloud of living witnesses: "The glorious company

of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs;" "the innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the first-born, enrolled in heaven, and God the Judge of all."

Soldiers of Christ, to arms! Ye young soldiers, who have just enlisted beneath the banners of the Prince of Peace—who have just fleshed your swords in temptation's earliest but earnest fight—think not yet of reward! Boast not yourselves, as you put on the armour, as he may boast who puts it off. It is not as though you had already attained. It is a life-campaign, to end only when life on earth is ended. Therefore, wisely prepare for war. Helm thy brow with salvation. Strengthen thy heart with prayer. Girdle on the armour of righteousness. Sandal thy feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Grasp the sword of the Spirit. Go forth conquering, and to conquer!

Soldiers of Christ, to arms! Ye who have been slothful, and at your ease; ye who have been slumbering upon the watch-towers of the mount of God; ye who have been loitering near the terraces of sin, as though the war had ended, or ye had made truce with hell; ye who have forgotten how truly and how terribly life is a battle, and therefore are swiftly hurled by temptation's first gust of passion to dust and to dishonour—be vigilant. Be sober. Be strong. Quit you like men. Fight the good fight of faith!

Soldiers of Christ, to arms! See you not still the standards of sin, red with the blood of souls, flaunting from the battlements of hell? Does not the spectacle excite a noble wrath? Would you not avenge the outrage? Pants not your soul with the resolve to pull down the stronghold of sin and Satan? Yearns not your spirit with a passionate desire yourself to mount the breach and drag down the standard, though the trophy became your winding sheet? Gather, then, with the soldiers of the cross. Enlist new recruits. From the halls of ease, from the homes of luxury, from the markets of the world, bring forth men for God. Let them be baptized for the dead. From your tents, O Israel; for the kingdom of *hell* suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Soldiers of Christ, to arms! Ye who are sundered by little outer differences, unite your forces; band yourselves with covenanted oath, and seal of blood. Fulfil your Leader's prayer—"that they all might be one." Serry your battalions into a phalanx, solid, invulnerable, irresistible—"the sacramental host of Christ's elect." Plant shoulder to shoulder, foot to foot, rank

to rank ; press onward as a wave of molten iron, though tipped with blood, surging against the retreating ranks of sin, till they are driven over the verge of hell, from whence they rose ; and until the army of God, in that triumphant hour, trampling principalities and powers beneath its feet, shall make the blue arch of heaven echo with its acclaim—"The kingdoms of this world *are become* the kingdoms of our God and His Christ!"

But while addressing you, the soldiers of Christ, I may, perhaps, be speaking in the presence of the enemies of Christ. There may be allies, traitors, here! Startling and solemn thought! Yet it may be so. Yes, on this, the Sabbath of Christ—in this, the sanctuary of Christ—I may be speaking in the hearing of the foes of Christ. For I read, "He that is not with me, is against me." Shoulder to shoulder with you in those pews; bound to you by the tenderest ties of affection—husband or wife, parent or child, brother or sister—and yet one the friend and the other the foe of Christ, and sundered in spirit wide as heaven and hell, mingling in this sad confusion. O, brethren, deeply search your hearts. Be true to yourselves, to one another, and to God, lest, haply, you be found by death with arms in your hands, and rebellion in your hearts, "fighting against God." On God's behalf I proclaim to you, that you may be reconciled to Him—that an amnesty has been declared for all who will return to His mild and gentle rule—that on your soul may descend the blessing of an infinite remission, if impelled by sense of peril, and allured by His boundless love, you hasten to His cross. Bow before His peaceful sceptre. Let not Satan twine over you his deadly toils. For you the sacrifice has been offered—for you the pardon has been ratified—for you redemption's gates are flung the widest—for you Christ has led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also.

Be faithful, and be faithful unto death; and then the hour shall come when the Captain of thy salvation shall give thee His reward. He shall take off the armour of thy earthly warfare, and put on thee the robe of righteousness. He shall unhelm thy furrowed brow, and place thereon the kingly diadem. He shall take from thy hand the sword thou hast wielded, and give thee the palm-branch and the harp of gold; and He shall whisper to thy soul that thy last battle is fought and thy last victory won. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."

INDIAN RULE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

A Sermon,

DELIVERED IN

UNION CHAPEL, ISLINGTON,

ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1857;

BEING

THE DAY SET APART FOR HUMILIATION AND PRAYER

ON ACCOUNT OF

THE INDIAN MUTINY.

BY THE

REV. HENRY ALLON.

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"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."—2 SAM. xxiii. 3.

"Quales sunt summi civitatis viri, talis est civitas."—CICERO.

AMOS II. 10—16.

"Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not. Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves. Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself: neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself. And he that is courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the Lord."

I AM not going to be so presumptuous as to affirm the strict application of all this to our government of India, and to the calamity which has befallen us there. We are cautioned too frequently against dogmatic interpretations of providential calamities to make it either wise or devout to adventure such. From the days of Job to the days of our Lord—from the falling of the tower of Siloam to the massacre at Cawnpore—men have been always prone to affiliate specific calamities upon specific moral acts. There can be no doubt that calamity of all kinds is the penalty of sin, and that in virtue both of natural and moral causes, specific sin produces specific calamities. And I am very far from saying, or thinking that this revolt in India may not be, in part at least, the direct logical issue of our impolitic and irreligious government there. Men so disposed, may construct a demonstration of this kind that it would be very hard to refute; and I think that we ought to be so far willing to recognize the great law of cause and effect as, wherever a natural and sufficient cause for revolt can be demonstrated, to regard the latter as its legitimate result. There can be no doubt that, to a very considerable degree, we are reaping the harvest of our own sowing.

But we may not affirm so positively, when we enter the domain of God's sovereignty, and recognize events which, while occurring no doubt through the operation of laws, are yet arbitrary and inscrutable to us, occurring without apparent cause or logical antecedent. We shall greatly err if we suppose that sin and suffering, either national or individual, are so distributed as that each instance

of individual suffering is the direct retribution of individual sin. Rather do we suffer in virtue of our membership in the great human family, upon which sin has entailed suffering, not always distributed according to the decrees of individual culpability. We may not infer that the individual or the nation that suffers calamity is "a sinner above other individuals or nations because it suffers such things." The Saviour would say "Nay," and would exhort the Pharisaic utterer of such a self-complacency to personal "repentance lest he likewise perish." Job's friends imagined that the unparalleled calamities which befel him were the retributions of specific hypocrisy or sin, and God himself had to interpose, and teach these "miserable comforters" other and broader principles of divine administration. "Neither," said our Lord, on another occasion, repudiating the same presumptuousness, "neither did this man sin nor his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him."

There are some cases in which men do palpably suffer the direct retribution of their sins: a drunkard does a ruinous thing, or meets with a damaging accident, in a fit of intoxication—a passionate man seriously compromises his own interests—a dishonest or immoral man is reprobated and shunned by all virtuous society. So also God, in the direct administration of his providence, may bring upon us many sorrows, as direct chastisements, just as he smote the child of David's sin with death. To deny this would be to deny the moral uses of Providence altogether. But the natural law of the one class of events, and the punitive providence of the other, by no means warrant the conclusion, that great suffering is always the admeasured retribution of great sins. Whatever perplexity such great suffering may occasion, such an interpretation of it would be more perplexing still; for, as a matter of fact, some of God's holiest servants have endured his heaviest inflictions.

The fact is, that men are ever running into extremes. Either they deny a Providence altogether, and refer every event to the exclusive operation of natural and mechanical laws, or else, ignoring natural laws altogether, they resolve all things into God's arbitrary infliction. They know no medium between atheism and fatalism, rationalism and superstition. Either they deny the great first cause, and refer all things to natural law or chance, or they deny secondary causes, and refer every thing to the supernatural, and conceive of that only under the form of moral retribution—qualified a little, mayhap,

by something like arbitrary will if not caprice—some especial sin calling forth some especial form of divine anger. And thus they stand by, in the old complacent spirit of the Pharisee, and judge the men upon whom God's hand is laid—"God, I thank thee that I am not as other men."

So that, instead of great lessons of dependence, repentance, and humility, being learned from God's awful providences, their teaching is perverted into the engendering of self-complacency and superciliousness. Were God strictly to visit us with retribution here, it is obvious that the radical character of our earthly life would be changed from probation to retribution; and if principles of strict equity were thus acted upon in God's providence, who would be able to stand?

We must, however, recognize the difference between such calamities as come directly from the Great First Cause, and are uninfluenced by human agency, and such as may fairly be attributed to the latter as their secondary cause. The revolt of an army whom we have trained, or of a people whom we have governed, is a very different thing from the desolation of a land by a tempest, the swallowing up of a city by an earthquake, or the decimation of a people by a pestilence. Had India been devastated by any calamity such as these, we might have bowed before God with uninquiring submission. But the calamity that has befallen us is through the formal operation of human agency, rather than of Divine. It has not come directly from God, like the whirlwind; but from the will and passion of man. There is room, therefore, for inquiry into its moral or social causes—into probable grievances or inducements. Why, after a century of dominion, should our soldiers revolt from us thus? For what wrong inflicted by us is this deadly vengeance, which they seek to glut with every conceivable infliction of dishonour and cruelty? Can we be satisfied with the easy solution, that it is merely the alarm of superstition, or the Mohammedan lust of reconquest? That these causes are contributing elements, it would be idle to deny; but are we quite sure that they are the only causes, or that they are entirely independent of our bearing and policy? Can we to-day stand up before God and man, and say, "Come what may, we are blameless; we have ruled, on the whole, justly and religiously; we have given no cause for just remonstrance—no provocation for political, social, or religious revolt"?

The principle, then, upon which I think we ought to interpret

this, and all calamities of God's providence, is, that in so far as they are inscrutable in their causes, independent of human agency, and palpably from God, we are not warranted in affixing any arbitrary interpretation to them, nor in calling them specific judgments; they are, rather, part of the general economy of suffering necessarily borne by selected individuals, and intended to teach all men alike important moral lessons. But, so far as they are caused by human agency, they are to be investigated in their motives and provocations—they are the legitimate consequences of our own acts.

Another remark that I would make is, that although I have selected a text of this particular complexion, I would not be confounded with the unrighteous and lugubrious men who are filling our newspapers with nothing but evil reproaches and evil forebodings—unctuously exaggerating every element of evil desert and of woeful calamity, and solicitously diminishing every element of satisfaction and hope. The Job's comforters of the nation, in the hour of its calamity, only without either sympathy or a seven days' silence—who tell it, that they can see only villainy in its rule, only retribution in its calamity, and only humiliation and discomfiture in its prospects—and who tell Europe and the world that our sins are unparalleled amongst the nations, and that our punishment will abase us at their feet—that ours, at length, is to be the retribution of Tyre, “the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth—that the Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth—that He hath stretched out His hand over the sea, and hath shaken the kingdoms—that the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant nation, to destroy the strongholds thereof.” (Isa. xxiii. 8—11.)

Men who hold up their nation's sins as things to be proud of, and their nation's calamities as things almost to exult over—for very thin indeed is the veil of decent expression, which they throw over this palpable feeling—whether it be the virulence of party politics, or the morbid misanthropy of perverted moral principles and feelings, it cannot be denied that a portion of the public press, and a considerable number of public men, both in church and state, speak of these calamities, sometimes, with an ill-conceived satisfaction, as if it were a comfort to them to have

their previsions so justified; and, at others, with manifestly more of sympathy for the murderous wretches who have tortured our wives and impaled our children—inflicting shame worse than torture, and torture worse than death—than for the poor unhappy victims of their cowardly lust and brutality. Now, such a thought and tone is, in my apprehension, as unjust and irreligious as it is unpatriotic. With no disposition whatever to justify either the crimes of our conquest, or the iniquities of our government, we may, I think—and, unless we annihilate all moral distinctions, we must say—that we are not “sinners above all the nations, because we suffer such things”—that our conquest of India, criminal as I think it largely to have been, is founded, to say the least, upon as just a right as that of any government that it has supplanted, and that may seek to supersede it—and that our rule, with all its selfishness, irreligiousness, and shortcomings, is incomparably the most just and beneficent that that land has ever been blessed with—and that its large and manifold sins and shortcomings are relieved by large and manifold virtues and beneficencies. Whatever, therefore, may be our culpability, as determined by the law of absolute right (and I offer no apology for any departure from that), yet our government of India, as compared with all other rule that the world has latterly seen, is, unquestionably, righteousness itself.

It is simply untruth and injustice, therefore, before God and man, to write and speak about our rule in India, as if it were unmitigated iniquity in its character, or unmitigated evil in its results—or to speak of its evil at all, without also speaking of its good. Our colonizing may have been marked with much injustice, but it has not been all injustice; our policy with many errors, but it has not been all error; our administration with much shortcoming, but it has not been all shortcoming; and so to speak of it is simply injustice and iniquity. Let *all* the truth, good and bad, be fairly and fully spoken before the people of England, and before Europe, and before India—let us “nought extenuate, and nought set down in malice,” and a conclusion somewhat different from the one-sided and disparaging one that is now inculcated will be arrived at.

I am not, I trust, forgetful of the principles and tempers which ought to characterize a Christian man, and to pervade a Christian sermon; nor yet of the forbearance and forgiveness which we ought to extend even to those “who despitefully use us and persecute us.”

But it would again be an utter perversion of right and holy principles were we to let outrages such as have been perpetrated in India pass without the sternest reprobation and retribution. It is, I know, easy enough to inflame vengeful and unhallowed feeling by the recital of such atrocities—nay, the difficulty is to keep it down. But the opposite of vengeful feeling is not a puling and immoral pity—an unholy extenuation of such crimes, done

“Before high heaven, as make the angels weep.”

And, if we need homilies and prayers to keep down the excess of resentful feeling on the one hand, it is evident enough, strange to say, that we also need homilies and prayers to keep us from a morbid sympathy with criminality on the other. Such sympathy can exist only where there is oblique moral perception, or a defective moral feeling. A man who unduly extenuates a sin, has evidently an inadequate sense of its evil. There is no indignation against wickedness so stern and terrible as that of the holy God himself, and no retribution of it so unsparing; and that just because he is so holy. It is his perfect holiness that renders sin so intolerable to him. He would mercifully rescue the sinner from the commission of his sin; but if he refuse to repent and forsake it, he sends him to hell. There is no connivance at sin in God's mercy. And such moral indignation against sin is a grace—a godlikeness. And there are evidently some amongst us who need to pray for more of it. It is not intemperate vengeance—not bloodthirstiness, that induces the law to pursue the murderer, and to take his life. Both the judge and the jury may be appalled at a criminal's wickedness, and weep over his perdition, and yet feel that their highest and holiest duty is to execute the sentence of the law upon him. And when men forget the enormities that he has been guilty of, and weakly and mawkishly sympathise with him, even when he gives no signs of repentance; and when, as in Liverpool the other day, they surround a wretch like the sea-captain, who was there executed for barbarities that vied with those of an Indian Sepoy, with sentimental interest, and talk about his having a “very feeling heart,” and his “looking tenderly” from his gallows at the sea, and about his “religious bearing” and experiences, “everything that a Christian ought to be,” and about his Christian charity in not vituperating the witnesses who had simply told the truth concerning him, or the jury who had righteously condemned him, and of his “pleasing and

hopeful frame of mind;" and when they administer to him the Lord's supper and represent his end as eminently religious—"just what you might expect from a British sailor and a Christian facing death;" even while he was "imploing" the chaplain "in very earnest terms to make it known that he did not consider he had been guilty of a single act which led to the death of that man," although he had gagged his poor victim by thrusting an iron bolt into his mouth—had taught the dog to fly at him and bite great pieces of flesh out of him—had rolled him up and down the deck in a water-cask for twelve hours—had hoisted him up to the main-mast, and suspended him there until his face became black, and his eyes protruded, and the blood came out of his mouth;—when for all this atrocity, he utters not one word of penitence, and yet is spoken of as having a feeling heart, and as dying a Christian death—this, I say, is to travestie and malign Christianity, and to bring it into contempt.* Every right instinct of our common nature revolts against it. My sympathies are with the poor wretch whom he tortured, and who probably was thus sent into eternity unprepared, and not with the scoundrel who was hanged. Had the latter shown himself sensible of his enormity—had he truly repented in God's sight, God would doubtless have forgiven him, and every Christian heart would have rejoiced.

But Christianity knows nothing—teaches nothing of sympathy for the persistently wicked. I may pity their wickedness, so as earnestly to seek to turn them from it; but I may not by act or feeling connive at it or forbear to punish it. The Christian law of love does not extend to this. The Christian law of forgiveness has no application here. Even the gentle and loving Christ, who prayed for his enemies, when they were nailing him to his cross, had no words of sympathy or hope for the impenitent thief, only for the penitent. And even for him he wrought no deliverance from his judicial sentence; expressed no regret that he should die; put in no extenuation of the confession "we justly."

So I say a stern and solemn justice must in the name of holiness—aye and of pity too—pity for those who might again be exposed to such atrocities, be executed upon these murderous men. The lord of the vineyard would "destroy the wicked husbandmen," whose crime of murder was proved, "and burn up their city,"—not

* Note A.

because they have arisen in revolt to throw off a foreign yoke; not because they have withstood our armies in an open field of fight; but because they have thrown off the common attributes of humanity; because they have treacherously murdered the men who confided in them; because they have avowed a purpose of dastardly and indiscriminate massacre; because they have put helpless women to foul shame, and butchered innocent babes before their mother's eyes, with every ingenuity of torture that the heart of a fiend could devise.

There are crimes against social law and life that society must punish,—that Christianity requires society to punish; not vindictively and with excess of penalty or cruelty—that would make us partakers of their sin; but sternly, solemnly, and adequately for the maintenance of right—for the punishment of wrong.

I know what will be said of Christian men and Christian ministers when they utter sentiments like these: they will be told that they ought rather to be insisting upon the "peace and goodwill" of Christianity, and have no feelings towards those great criminals but pity and love. I am not greatly moved by such remonstrance; Christianity has its righteousness as well as its love, and there is a time to speak of the one as well as of the other. I think that I conceive more justly and nobly of the peace and goodwill of Christianity than those who would admonish me. I conceive of a "peace" which is "the fruit of righteousness," of a "goodwill," not to murderers, merely, but to those who are murdered and exposed to be murdered. Aye, and to their murderers too, if they will but repent. I conceive of Christian love as having its basis—not in a weak sympathy with wickedness—not in a guilty compromise of righteousness, but in uprightness and holiness, even as God's love itself is based. God shows no love to the sinner until every claim of holiness is satisfied. Love without holiness is sin; and to talk about Christian love at the sacrifice of Christian holiness, is to understand neither the one nor the other.

And yet this is what a section of Christian men amongst us are doing. When I talk about the murder of English women and children in India, I am told about the opium trade of the East India Company, and its wickedness towards the Chinese; or—with a fatuous blindness to the true moral question at issue—the text is quoted to me, "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

I am willing enough, in its proper place, to discuss the iniquity of our opium-traffic—as one of the elements of our mis-rule—that must be displeasing to a righteous God. I am willing enough to discuss the morality of our conquest of India, and of our government of it, and to test them sternly by Christian principles; but these are not the question here—*that* is simply the moral character and deserts of atrocities which have made the ears of the civilized world to tingle, and which no unrighteous conquest or misrule on our part could justify. Why is it that when these persons tell me about the opium traffic, and about our conquest of India, and about our misgovernment of it, and about all that these sins deserve, which desert I would be the last to question,—why is it that they preserve a perfect silence about the desert of these misercants? What is it but to extenuate their crime, to have no strong, healthy, holy word of condemnation to pronounce against it? Why should their principal theme be always our misdoings, and these outrages only the subordinate and incidental theme? Why should these enormities be spoken of as a righteous retribution upon us, and not spoken of as demanding a righteous retribution upon them? There can be neither a healthy morality, nor a right Christian conception in such a case. Let these gentlemen set themselves right with our moral instincts, and with the morality of the Bible, by a clear, outspoken, and healthy moral judgment upon these crimes,—and then they will have allayed a suspicion and secured a prepossession which will enable us to sit humbly and penitently in the dust, at the recital of our own sins.

Having thus vindicated two or three principles, which appear to me to lie at the basis of all right judgments, and of all right prayers on this matter, I may now say that I have read to you this passage from the prophet Amos, because our business to-day, if there be any meaning at all in a day of humiliation, is to examine ourselves before God, not before man.

We have not to state our case now for the judgment of our fellow-men—that would require us to state both the evil and the good—but we have to humble ourselves before him who perfectly knows our case: before him we dare mention no excellencies; he may graciously regard them, but we dare not boast them. Before him we simply confess our sins, ask him to forgive them, and to give us grace to forsake them. It avails not that there may

have been much in our Indian rule that has been righteous and beneficial; there has been much that is evil too; and the most searching God requires of us uprightness in all things. Before him, he that offends in one point is guilty of all—guilty in proportion to his light and privilege. As before God, and in relation to our light, we cannot exaggerate the sin of our Indian rule, we stand before him, therefore, penitently and humbly, not to tell him of our good, but to confess our evil; to lay our hand upon our sinful acts and to ask him mercifully to forgive them, in order that our rule in India—if India be spared to us—may be more righteous, and beneficent, and Christian.

Nor must we, the ordinary members of the English society, assemble in our churches full of self-complacency, as if our statesmen and officials alone were culpable for what has been wrong, and our simple functions were to be intercessors for them. Be sure of this, that the government of a nation like this will, in the course of a series of years, very fairly represent the wishes and moral feelings of the community, and that our officials in India are, on the whole, fair specimens of the morality of the nation; that is, they are what we ourselves should be in their circumstances. When men stand by and see affairs administered, it is easy enough to be wise in judgment and indignant in reprobation. We have a kind of unofficial virtue about us which makes us imagine ourselves beings of quite a superior type of virtue. Now let us be sure of this, that whatever our government does at home, or our officials in India, we ourselves should, in their circumstances, be quite capable of doing. Their virtue is substantially ours; it represents the tone of our life, the standard of our morality; and if, therefore, there has been sin in our policy, it has been essentially the moral feeling of the nation that has been at fault, and not that of the Governor-General or of the Court of Directors merely. We have cause, therefore, to kneel down side by side with them, and to confess a common sinfulness of temper and habit; the moral causes which have led to wrong-doing have been in us equally with them. And if we do not do this, if we come before God imagining that we are the righteous many, and that our statesmen are the wicked few, why our national humiliation will be a national hypocrisy, and our attitude, again, that of the Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men."

"We have only," says a writer in yesterday's *Times*, "to look at

home to what is passing around us, even in this metropolis, to feel how miserably England belies her own lofty pretensions. What a gulf between the rich and the poor, the master and the servant! How little does the one know of the other! What sullen antipathies, what contemptuous exclusiveness, on the one side, what envious ignorance on the other, utterly alienate men bound together by their occupations and the necessities of existence! Securely trusting to the permanence of the social fabric, and to the common instincts of private interest, wealthy, enlightened and even kind-hearted men allow gloomy resentments, angry passions, and still worse, grovelling brutality, to go on below them, unchecked, unimproved, unheeded. We have only to suppose the actual relations of the classes the same in India as at home, and there is quite enough to account for any amount of mutual ignorance, misunderstanding, alienation, and ultimate revolt."

The passage before us embodies some very important principles, which, however, after the remarks that I have made, I need do little more than indicate.

I. First, it teaches us the connexion that there is between God's providential agency and territorial acquisition.

No Christian man, I suppose, would stand up as the apologist of our Indian colonization—the advocate of Lord Clive—the vindicator of Warren Hastings. Such of you as are not familiar with the history of India need only peruse "Macaulay's Essays" on those two men, to learn how utterly inexcusable were the corruption and fraud with which in great part its earlier territories were acquired. And there is assuredly retribution for every such sin. God never permits nations to do wrong with impunity; and it is no justification of the wrong, that we are not so bad as others, or that our rule is an inestimable blessing to the governed. As well might you justify a man in stealing a miser's purse, because he gave all its contents to the poor. Still the history of the world, from the expulsion of the Amorites from Canaan to the annexation of Oude, has been a history of territorial conquest, which has been the chief means of human civilization and religion. The conquest of the Persians by the Greeks, conveying the inestimable blessings of their literature and civilization,—then of the degenerate Greeks by the Romans, establishing everywhere law and security, and achieving great works of public utility,—then of the Romans by the Goths,

sweeping away their filthy decrepitude, and infusing new, and vigorous, and wholesome life,—then of the idolatrous people of the East by the Saracens, sweeping away the debris of old mythologies, and establishing a comparatively pure and noble monotheism,—and now, in modern times, the conquest of the Indian tribes of America by our puritan fathers and their descendants, filling that vast continent with Christian civilization and religion,—so again, the colonizing of England, in Australia, Africa, and India, fraught with inestimable blessings of law and security, and commerce, and morality, and religion, to nearly one-half the world. God gave to the Israelites the land of Canaan, because the “iniquity of the Amorites was full”—not, however, because the Israelites were free from iniquity. And thus in successive ages of the world,—not less by the appointments of his wise Providence, than by the operation of natural causes—he has carried on its social and religious development, by giving the land of worn out and demoralized nations to nations younger, and more vigorous, and more virtuous than they. And no marvel is greater than that the people of an insignificant island like England, lying on the very outskirts of the world’s population, but possessing Christianity, and all the moral order and virtue and energy that spring from it, should effectually have acquired, and either directly or through her descendants, should firmly retain supremacy over half the globe. We cannot account for this altogether by the natural vigour which Christianity gives. We must believe that, notwithstanding our sins, there is providential agency and purpose in it; unless, indeed, we exclude Providence from half the government of the world, and from the whole of its history.

At the same time, we do not even suggest the approval by a holy Providence of the fraud and violence with which territory may be acquired, any more than of the political frauds and treacheries of the Israelites. These things he will assuredly punish, even while he subordinates them to results of great and permanent benefit,—according to that wonderful economy of Providence whereby he evolves good out of evil. He may not deprive us of India—that, so far as our poor judgment can calculate, would be to restore the predominancy of superstition and barbarism, which has never yet been done in the world’s history; the leaven of civilization and of Christianity once introduced can never be extracted; it mingles inseparably with the

fermenting mass, and the people possessing it in the largest degree will always have the ascendancy; but in other ways he may righteously and terribly punish us for all the wrong of our acquisitions of India, and for all the unfaithfulness of our government of it.

II. Another principle involved in the text is the connexion that there is between moral and religious obligation and territorial acquisition.

God represents himself as requiring eminent religious character, and service of his people. When he had thus given them the land of the Amorite—"I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not." God provides means of religious teaching and culture. He raises up gifted men to be prophets, and holy men to be Nazarites;—but the people utterly pervert and abuse the gift—they put a gag upon the prophet and will not let him utter God's message, and they seek to corrupt the Nazarite by making him violate his vow and desecrate his holy character. And then, as descriptive of the general wickedness, the godlessness, idolatry, covetousness, and immorality into which the people fell, God represents himself as groaning beneath the burden of their iniquities—as "pressed under them as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves."

How literally true all this is of our government of India I hardly need say. From the day when the British missionary was compelled to take refuge under a foreign flag, and when he was conveyed from the ship to the gaol for the great crime of coming to India to preach Christianity, to the dismissal of the Sepoy from the Bengal army because he became a Christian, and thence to the present hour the uniform policy of the East India Company has been one of hostility to missions. In the great conflict between Christianity and Paganism, its help has uniformly been arrayed on the side of the latter. Hindooism has its subsidies out of the Government treasury, and Mahommedanism has its subsidies, but Christianity has been prohibited from opening its mouth. The Company has rebuilt idol temples and redecored pagodas; it has compelled Christian soldiers to officiate at Pagan festivals, and Christian officers to collect Pagan revenues—compelling men like Sir Peregrine Maitland to leave its service on account of its identification with idolatry, and

men like Carey and Dr. Judson to leave its shores on account of its opposition to Christian missionaries. It has closed its schools against Christianity, and prohibited even conversion to it in its service. It is hardly too much to say that our Indian Government has mainly upheld the decaying strength of idolatry and caste, and more than any other power neutralized the moral influence of Christianity. And now that Lord Canning has ventured to become a subscriber to certain Christian societies, it has become the ground of remonstrance in the British House of Lords. Even on the low ground of policy this has been a blunder as great, as religiously it has been a sin. It has shorn us of the moral power of religious character and sincerity. It has nurtured the elements which are our most deadly antagonists. That which is morally wrong can never be politically right. Every Government for the last fifty years, not in England only, but still more strikingly in France, has demonstrated that. Religiously, it is the old sin of the Israelites for which they were carried away into captivity, planting idol groves and building for them high places.

No man would wish, because of our supremacy, to have perfect liberty of Pagan opinion and worship interfered with—the maxim of Philip Nye, which so startled the Westminster Assembly, “It is our opinion, by the command of God, that the magistrate be discharged from putting a discourtesy on any man, be he Turk, Jew, Papist, Socinian, Infidel, or of any religion whatsoever, on account of his religious belief,” has too widely obtained for this. Yet surely from the Government of a Christian nation, the same may be fairly claimed for Christianity. At any rate, let the two systems be left alone to the contest of argument and moral power—put no disability upon the missionary—lend no invidious support to the Brahmins.

If there be any great moral end for which God has given us India, it is assuredly its Christianization; and if, forgetting this, we regard commercial gain, and imperial revenue, and military power, and territorial acquisition, as our only ends, why, we shall be as unfaithful to the trust of the Gospel as the Jews were to their revelation of the true God, and we may well fear lest God smite our strength even as he smote theirs. In spite of imperial prohibition and discountenance, our missionaries have done much to evangelize India; but I fear it must be said that our Government has done but

little. With a hundred millions of souls committed to our rule, we have hardly thought of their religious interests at all. We have cared only for the rupees that unscrupulous agents and an iniquitous opium-trade could supply, and for the aggressive power that an army of Sepoys would constitute. We have done next to nothing either in the social development or Christian conversion of India. Hardly a material vestige of our presence in India during the last century would be left upon the soil were we now expelled from it, save, perhaps, the railroads that are just now constructing. Until the year 1833, British-born subjects were prohibited from either purchasing or renting lands in India, lest their presence should be embarrassing to unscrupulous functionaries, and to this day their settlement is systematically discouraged; terrible recitals of fraud and torture in the collection of revenue have long been familiar to the British Parliament, and constitute a heavy charge against the Government that connived at them.* The chief result of our government of Bengal has been an annual revenue, provision for cadets, and an army of Sepoys, which latter has just broken to pieces in our hands. Latterly, indeed, a wiser policy has been inaugurated, and the cessation of support to idolatry, the amelioration of cruel laws, and the construction of railroads, have been the result. Would that this had been our policy from the beginning. How strong, and prosperous, and Christian, might India have been now. To quote again from the *Times* :—

“We see what has been often suspected, but, on the most convincing and lamentable of proofs, can no longer be denied,—that we have not succeeded in winning the confidence, the respect, and the love of the Sepoy, and of that large part of the Indian population connected with the army. We have not won the reverence due to ourselves as a nobler race. Our vast superiority in knowledge has gone for little or nothing. Our services to India have not been understood. The justice of our rule and the integrity of our judicial system have not enjoyed the appreciation we ought to have obtained for them. The superior beneficence and purity of our religion have not been so vividly and transparently exhibited in practice as to constrain the admiration and love of these miserable heathens, the dupes of the most ridiculous inventions and the foulest idolatry. We have not converted the people who have

* Note B.

witnessed the every-day life of British gentlemen and ladies, we will not say to an acceptance of our religion, but even to any high regard for it. Surely by this time Christianity even under the prohibition of proselytism, ought to have shone out so conspicuously as to overshadow and shame away the coarse stupidities and vile drivellings of either Mussulman or Hindoo. At all events, even conceding that a long established superstition embodied in a social system, requires time to wear away, we ought to have stood high in that land of many religions as a consistent, believing, just, kind, and holy people. That we have not even done this, and that we are regarded simply as unbelievers, with little religion except a few negative tenets which we find convenient for political purposes, must be deemed to prove a shortcoming in our practice. It must be our fault that we Christians stand so much lower in the religious scale of India than we did in the scale of ancient paganism."

III. The third principle is the culpability of thus refusing to recognize the religious responsibilities of territorial rule. Morally, these things constitute great national culpability — the *duties* of authority have been forgotten in the selfish assertion of its prerogatives. And this demonstrates an utter forgetfulness of the great ends for which God has given us India; we have gagged the prophet and made the Nazarite drunk.

IV. Lastly, therefore, I remark the certainty with which such unfaithfulness will be followed by disaster and discomfiture. "Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force; neither shall the mighty deliver himself; neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself; neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself; and he that is courageous among the mighty shall flee away in that day, saith the Lord."

The language is startling in the accuracy of its description of what has befallen us. I will not, however, presume further to interpret God's judgment by it. All that I will say is, that we have failed precisely in that result which more than any other we have sought and boasted, and that I think because it was selfish and immoral, viz., in our Sepoy army. We have not depended upon the moral attachment of the people, solicited by social and religious benefits,—but upon an army of soldiers; not even upon soldiers taken from

the mass of the people, but upon a caste. Almost everything has been subordinated to the formation and maintenance of this army; some twelve millions sterling have been annually expended upon it. We have boasted to Europe and the world, that we governed India, not by our moral hold upon the people, but by an army of her own sons—an army to which the Christian minister was denied all access. Almost all that we have recently conquered in India has been conquered chiefly by means of it; we thought it the arm of our strength. And yet it is this, precisely this, that has failed us, and nothing else has failed.* The moral hold of religious benefaction, which our rulers scorned, but which our missionaries have secured, remains—and now saves us India!*

The Christian schools of our mission stations overflow, while the godless schools of Government are half deserted. It is the crafty caught in his own craftiness—the strong man deceived in his strength. It reminds one of the utter collapse of Louis Philippe's policy in 1848—that which is unmoral in policy—that which is selfish, expedient, or godless, can never endure; "righteousness alone exalteth a nation." May God in mercy to us grant that only this selfish element in our rule of India may fail—that this is the evil which he is seeking to correct, and that all that is moral in our missionary and Christian hold of India may abide.

We have then reason enough for our prayers to-day.

First, to confess publicly and without deceit or reserve our wrongdoing—our national fraud and violence in acquiring territory, and our national culpability in the principles upon which we have governed it. Let us bring our empire and lay it at God's feet, and tell him to do with it and us as seemeth best to him. It may not be essential to his purposes that we should retain it. We cannot for a moment think that when it becomes Christianized and great we can retain it; we hold it in trust till its spiritual education is complete. Let us confess to God that we do not deserve to retain it. Ask him to spare it to us if he see it wise; but be willing to resign it, if in his just judgment he require us to do so. We must, I think, approach God in this temper, and with these thoughts, if our confession is to be sincere—our prayer honest and holy—anything better than an hypocrisy. We may not come before God with the foregone conclusion that India is to remain ours at any cost. If we

* Note C.

simply pray for victory and the restoration of peace, irrespective of the moral right or wrong of our own position, we shall "regard iniquity in our heart, and God will not hear us."

Let us pray for the grace of true spiritual repentance—the "repentance whereby we forsake sin;" which shows regret for the past by holy amendment for the future; and if God continue India to us, let us resolve that the highest and holiest aims and principles shall mark our government of it: for with us—the people of England—this ultimately rests.

Let us pray for our rulers—that God would give them the peculiar wisdom and grace which they need. And for ourselves—as the great mass of the nation—its merchants and traders—that no considerations of national glory, of territorial acquisition, or of commercial gain shall warp our judgment and purpose from what is right.

Let us pray for our soldiers—our soldiers in India, and who may be journeying thither—that the "God of battles" would guide and guard them from all calamities of flood and field—that he would "cover their head in the day of battle;" and, if it please him, crown them with rapid and easy victory; that he would restrain in them all excess of vengeful passion, and attemper their just resentment by Christian forbearance.

Let us pray that he would vouchsafe such special interpositions of his providence as we fondly think we see in the circumstances connected with this outbreak—the disconcertion of its plan, and the contiguity of our troops.

Let us pray for our poor countrymen and countrywomen shut up in towns (as in Lucknow) or in defenceless districts—exposed to the bloodthirsty rage and still more cruel lust of savage men.

Let us pray for the miserable men who are under the dominion of such fiend-like passions and have perpetrated such cruelties—that God would "turn their hearts;" cast out the demons of rapine and lust which possess them, and change their treacherous hypocrisy and their brutality into feelings of humanity and religion.

Let us pray for our missionaries—that he who preserved his servants in the fiery furnace would preserve them, and make their piety and fidelity a moral power to convince and convert Pagan hearts.

And especially let us pray for those upon whom terrible bereave-

ments have fallen—Husbands who have seen the dishonour and butchery of their wives!—Wives and mothers who have seen the torture and massacre of their children!—Rachels who “refuse to be comforted because their children are not.”

India has now in more senses than one its noble army of martyrs—martyrs of the army, and of social life, whose deeds equal in heroism any that fame has transmitted, like the noble soldier who, in the reality of modern life, equalled the fabled devotion of Curtius, and fired the magazine at Delhi. Many of them God’s heroes and martyrs too, like the noble lad at Allahabad, who, full of the old martyr spirit, shrunk not amid murderous men to confess Christ, but was faithful even unto death—strong in faith, and in bold, and calm, and holy consecration of body and soul to God.

Oh, what swelling recollections will soothe bereaved sorrow! What light both of heaven and earth will shine round the angel of death—they sleep the soldier’s and the Christian’s sleep. May God visit and comfort all who have thus been bereaved, and may the sympathy and reverence of the nation and the Church gather round their homes and minister to their woes. Thus may we pray, “From all seditions, privy conspiracy, and rebellion—Good Lord deliver us.”

NOTES.

A. (Page 9.)

“The Chaplain said: Last night Rogers slept more comfortably than he had done before for a short time. He has been in the constant habit of praying, even when I have not been with him, very beautifully and very fervently, and in a most delightful manner, which gave me much pleasure. I considered him most penitent—*everything that a Christian ought to be on his deathbed*. He has never expressed the least feeling of animosity towards anybody, but, on the contrary, when praying, he always remembered to pray for those who had done him any wrong, and that without any exception. He has never once expressed, although he might have strong feelings about it, one single word against his witnesses. He has been wonderfully supported; he had his senses to the last. The last thing on the scaffold, he asked—‘What is it you asked me to say?’ I replied—‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ He had asked me before for some short and suitable prayer. I told him he might use a short prayer of that length in the last moment. He had asked me two or three times. On the way to the scaffold he turned round and asked, as if he had forgotten, what the words were. He thought it was ‘Lord Jesus, receive my thanks.’ I said ‘No; “spirit.”’

“Mr. Wright: *I never went to a greater penitent* wherever I went, except to poor Pedder. Calcraft: *It was wonderful.*”—*Report of Captain Rogers’s execution in the Liverpool Mercury, Sept. 16, 1857.*

B. (Page 17.)

The following account of the proceedings of Deni Sing, an agent of Warren Hastings, given in "Mill's British India," on the authority of Mr. Patterson, a gentleman in the Company's service, is painfully illustrative of the incidental iniquities that the Company have connived at:—

"The poor ryots, or husbandmen, were treated in a manner that would never gain belief, if it was not attested by the words of the Company; and Mr. Burke thought it necessary to apologize to their lordships for the horrid relation with which he would be obliged to harrow their feelings. The worthy Commissioner, Patterson, who had authenticated the particulars of this relation, had wished, for the credit of human nature, he might have drawn a veil over them; but as he had been sent to inquire into them, he must, in the discharge of his duty, state those particulars, however shocking they were to his feelings. The cattle and corn of the husbandman were sold for a third of their value, and their huts reduced to ashes. The unfortunate owners were obliged to borrow from usurers, that they might discharge their bonds, which had unjustly and illegally been extorted from them while they were in confinement; and such was the determination of the infernal fiend, Deni Sing, to have these bonds discharged, that the wretched husbandmen were obliged to borrow money, not at twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty, but at SIX HUNDRED per cent., to satisfy him! Those who could not raise this money were most cruelly treated. Cords were drawn tight round their fingers, till the flesh of the four on each hand was actually incorporated and became one solid mass. The fingers were then separated by wedges of iron and wood driven in between them! Others were tied, two and two by the feet, and thrown across a wooden bar, upon which they hung with their feet uppermost. They were then beaten on the soles of the feet till the toe-nails dropped off! They were afterwards beat about the head till the blood gushed out of the mouth, nose, and ears. They were also flogged on the naked body with bamboo canes and prickly bushes, and, above all, with some poisonous weeds, which were of a caustic nature, and burnt at every touch. The cruelty of the monster who had ordered all this, had contrived how to tear the mind as well as the body. He had frequently had a father and a son tied naked to one another by the feet and arms, and then flogged till the skin was torn from the flesh; and he had the devilish satisfaction to know that every blow must hurt, for if one escaped the son, his sensibility was wounded by the knowledge he had that the blow had fallen upon his father. The same torture was felt by the father when he knew that every blow that missed him had fallen upon his son.

"The treatment of the females could not be described. Dragged from the inmost recesses of their houses, which the religion of the country had made so many sanctuaries, they were exposed naked to public view. The virgins were carried to the Court of Justice, where they might naturally have looked for protection, but they now looked for it in vain; for, in the face of the ministers of justice, in the face of the spectators, in the face of the sun, those tender and modest virgins were brutally violated. The only difference between their treatment and that of their mothers was, that the former were dishonoured in the face of day, the latter in the gloomy recesses of their dungeons. Other females had the nipples of their breasts put in a cleft bamboo and torn off.

"What follows is too shocking and indecent to transcribe. All this, be it remembered, took place under British rule, by an officer in British employment, and for the purpose of extorting revenue for the exchequer of the East India Company."

And the report of the proceedings of the Madras Torture Commission in 1856 shows that this is not wholly a thing of the past.

C. (Page 19.)

I have been favoured with a communication from the Rev. Miron Winslow, of the American Board of Missions, who has laboured in Madras since the year 1819, from which the following is an extract:—

“Both the Hindoos and Mohammedans are too keen-sighted to attribute, except in pretence, to the East India Company, a design to make the natives Christians by force. Indeed, judging from what the Company has done, they would have more occasion to think that its influence would be against Christianity. The fact is, that while professing to be Christian, the government have discouraged the propagation of the Christian faith among their native subjects. They have done this from policy, for fear that their rule would be endangered by any encroachments on existing superstitions, and so the *dividends* of the Company would be diminished. They have been double-faced and inconsistent. This the natives have seen, and have attributed it to the right cause—the fear of rebellion. They have attributed to weakness all the deference paid to caste and superstition; and when they thought these were interfered with, they rose at once.

“The government have trusted to a crooked policy, and studied expediency, instead of trusting the Lord and doing good so as to be established; they have sown the wind, and are reaping the whirlwind. ‘Him that honoureth me I will honour,’ is God’s rule of administration, and the nation or kingdom that fails in its duty to him must expect judgments from his hand.

“After I went to Madras, there was a custom continued, which had been long in use, of paying public homage to an idol named Agâti in that city. The image was brought out in procession, at an annual festival, to the principal gate of Fort St. George, and there met by the commandant, or some one acting for him, and honoured by the presentation of rich cloths, in a manner similar to what was done in presenting a cloth of gold to Juggernaut in Orissa, yearly, by the authorities in Bengal.

“At the same time, and until strong petitions went home on the subject from Madras, public salutes were fired in honour of the principal festivals of the Hindoos and Mohammedans, and a commander-in-chief of the Madras army was obliged to relinquish his command because he declined giving orders to Christian soldiers to fire such salutes; and at least one collector was removed from his post because he was unwilling to use his official influence in honour of these festivals.”

Still more important are the following extracts from a letter which appeared in the *Times* of Oct. 9:—

“I submit the following facts, falling within the period of my official life, in proof of my assertion:—First, let us take the fact of the expulsion, under the immediate orders of the Governor-General, from the Bengal army, of one of its non-commissioned officers, a man of good birth, a Brahmin, and an excellent soldier, on the sole ground that he had sought Christian baptism. I ask, was not this a disavowal and practical negation of our faith in the eyes of every Hindoo and Mussulman in the army? How else could they understand it? Look, again, at the salutes from our ramparts, even on a Sunday, in honour of idolatrous Mohammedan festivals. These sounded in my ears during a long period of my residence in India. Look at the offerings presented in the name of the Government to idols; to the grants from the public treasury in seasons of famine and drought, for idolatrous rites to propitiate the Hindoo deities for rain; and to that whole system of support and supervision of Hindoo temples and their affairs, now happily almost abolished, and which was felt by myself and by every Christian officer required to carry out the system as a practical disavowal of our Christianity. This system is even now in force by law, for the legislative enactments enjoining it are still unrepealed.

"But to pass on to some of the facts of later date. I hold the present orders of the Indian Government, putting a positive prohibition on the reading of the Scriptures by heathen and Mohammedan boys in every government place of education throughout India, even when such reading is perfectly optional with, and consented to, by the youth and his parents, as a disavowal of our Christian character, and that it is, and can only be viewed as a repudiation of our faith by the Hindoo and Mohammedan world. Does he think that the Moslem would so dishonour his Koran, and the Hindoo his Shastras? I cannot pass by, also, the Court's orders of comparatively a late date, sent to the Government of India, to proclaim to every native of India that they would proscribe any one of their Christian servants who should afford pecuniary aid or countenance to missions, or to any such efforts for the enlightenment of the people. These orders I know were not enforced, although they were, as we are expressly told by the then Chairman of the Court, in furtherance of 'the policy so long observed by our Government.' But why were they not enforced? Let Colonel Sykes move for these orders in the House, and when they are produced, with the minute of Mr. Frederick Millet, who upon their receipt at once placed his seat in the Supreme Council in the Lands of the Court of Directors, the public may judge whether there has been, as I allege, a negation by the Government of our Christianity. Further, let the orders be produced interdicting any provision at the cost of Government for the Christian instruction of the degraded tribes, Naides, of Malabar, held by the Hindoo to be so impure that none but a native Christian who had risen above caste prejudices would approach them. Let us have, also, the recent orders sent in the case of the wretched uncivilized Santhals of Bengal—neither (be it observed) Hindoo nor Mohammedan—and contrast these orders with what has been done for the uncivilized races at the Cape, New Zealand, and elsewhere, and see whether there has not been an abnegation by our Indian Government of our Christianity."—J. L. THOMAS, *late Member of the Council, Madras.*

The following is extracted from the report of a meeting of Hindoo gentlemen held in Calcutta. Baboo Duckinarunjun Mookerjee, in the course of his speech, made the following remarks:—

"Then as to the Missionaries, a man must be a total stranger to the thoughts, habits, and character of the Hindoo population, who could fancy that because the Missionaries are the apostles of another religion, the Hindoos entertain an inveterate hatred towards them.

"However we may differ with the Christian Missionaries in religion, I speak the minds of the Society, and generally of those of the people, when I say, that as regards their learning, purity of morals, and disinterestedness of intention to promote our weal, no doubt is entertained throughout the land, nay they are held by us in the highest esteem. European history does not bear on its record the mention of a class of men who suffered so many sacrifices in the cause of humanity and education as the Christian Missionaries in India; and though the native community differ with them in the opinion that Hindustan will one day be included in Christendom, for the worship of Almighty God in His Unity as laid down in the Holy Veda, is and has been our religion for thousands of years, and is enough to satisfy all our spiritual wants, yet we cannot forbear doing justice to the venerable ministers of a religion, who, I do here most solemnly asseverate, in piety and righteousness alone, are fit to be classed with those Rishees and Mohatmas of antiquity who derived their support, and those of their charitable boarding-schools, from voluntary subscriptions, and consecrated their lives to the cause of God and knowledge."—*Phoenix, Calcutta newspaper, Aug. 8, 1857.*





